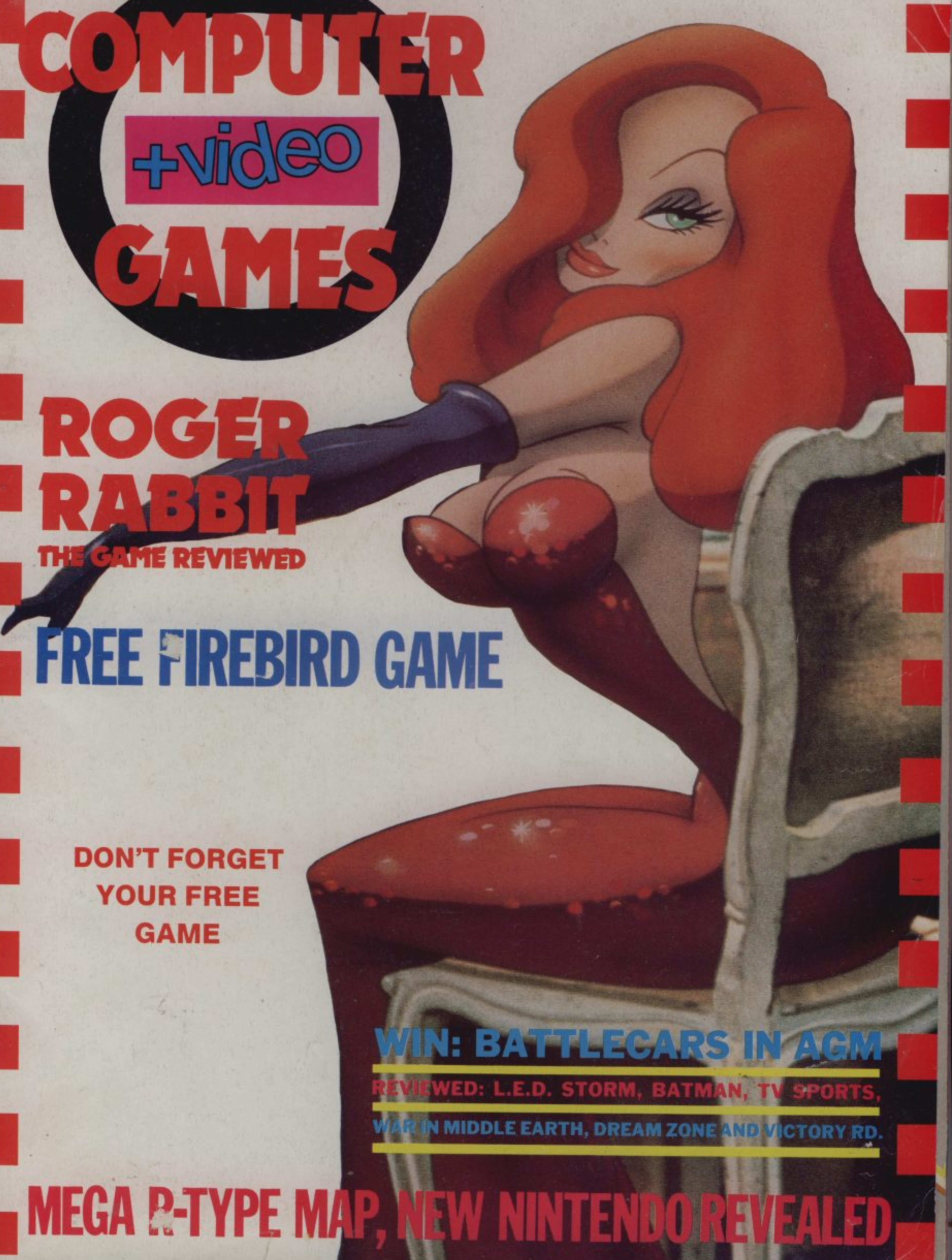
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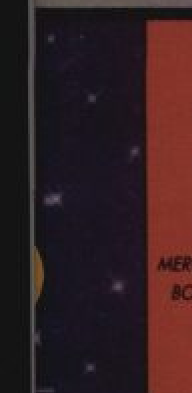
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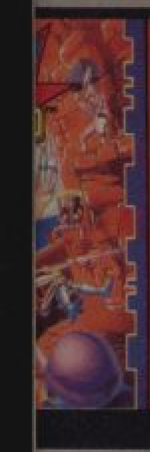
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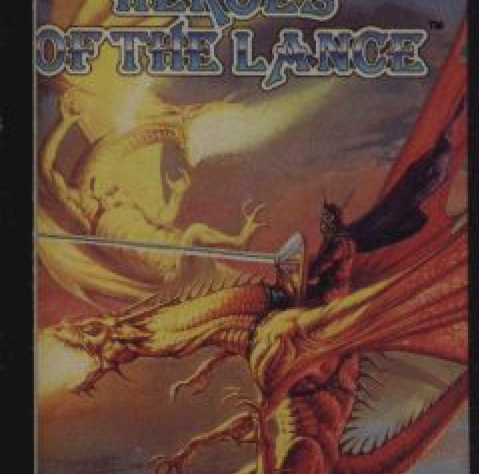
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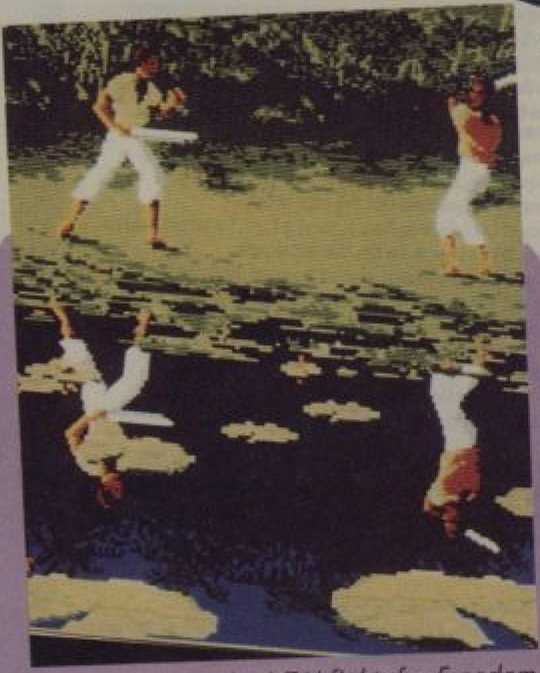
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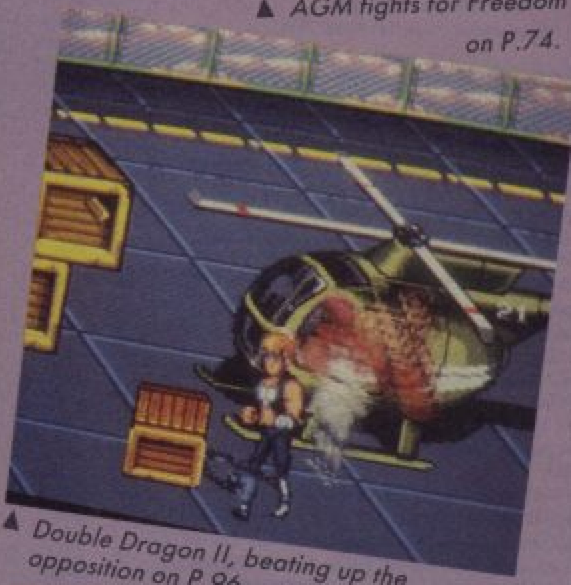
R DEALER

number 2!

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▲ Y/S – Sega arcade adventuring on P.104.



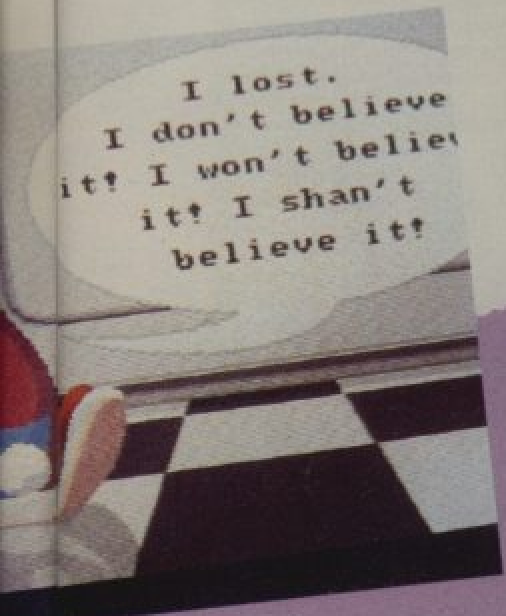
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▲ Pla



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Spo[rts]



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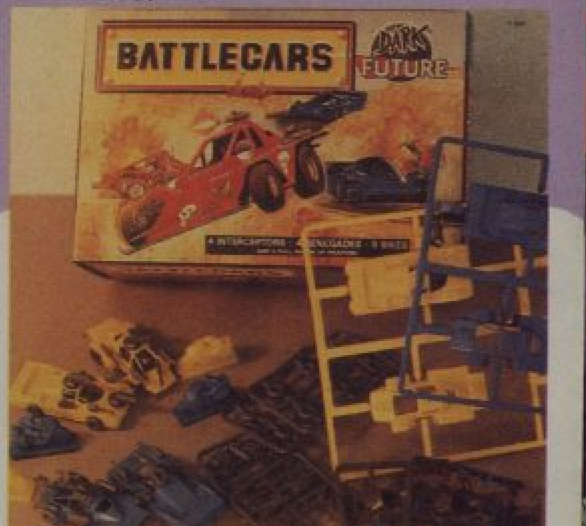
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▲ Battle Cars up for grabs in AGM. – P.80.


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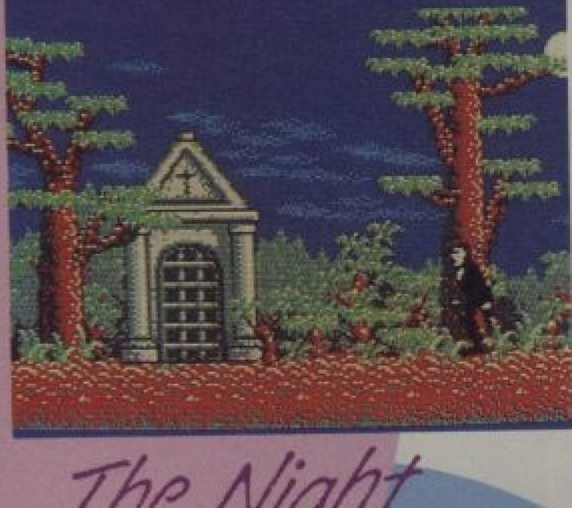
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Calling All Tra

New software house EAS are about to launch STAG for the Amiga and ST. It's a space trading game in similar style to Elite, and casts the player as a future salesman who works for the Space Trading Company. The objective is simply to buy and sell goods from aliens and make a profit. Simple? No, not really – there are plenty of pirates out there in the w d just waiting to get their hands on your lucre. Released early next year, STAG looks like it'll give Gremlin Graphic's FOFT (which is as yet unfinished, despite what other mags might say) a run for its money. We'll be reviewing both games when we receive them.

Death Stalks The Night



Pictured here is the latest piece of Euro-entertainment from the garcons at Ubi Soft. The name of the game is Night Hunter and centres on the adventures (or should that be arcade adventures?) of everyone's favourite vampire, Count Dracula as he hunts for the vampire-repelling medallions which have been keeping him and his undead buddies from their blood-sucking antics. Once he's collected all of the medallions, nothing can stop Dracula and his supernatural cohorts from creating terror on earth and generally having a good time. Of course, standing in his way are the usual Van Helsings, armed with bows and arrows and deadly stakes, guaranteed to give any vamp a coronary. The game features loads of sampled spooky sounds, including a pretty grisly blood-slurping effect which chilled the more sensitive members of the CVG staff to the marrow. Night Hunter is to appear on the ST in January, priced at £19.99, with versions for the Amiga, PC, C64, Spectrum and Amstrad to follow shortly thereafter.



The 16 Bit

Wrangler, pictured here, is one for ST and Amiga fans who take control of Clint Eastwood and droid Adonis whose mission in life is to repair the panels which make up the play area, while avoiding alien robo-pests. There are 32 levels to the game, each made up of nine screens of maddeningly addictive puzzle action, and considering the game is a product of the accomplished Mr Chip team, it should be one to watch out for. The C + VG reviews are needless to say, imminent.



Charts



Have Simulator,

Anyone drowning in their own tears because they missed out on a trip in Microprose's Apache helicopter simulator which drew the crowds at the 1988 PC Show, might soon get another chance to go on the ride of a lunchtime. Last year, an Irish entrepreneur took delivery of a Super X simulator, bunged it on the back of an articulated lorry and has since been touring England and Ireland, putting in appearances at exhibitions and trade shows to let wide-eyed punters sample the delights of modern simulator technology.



Manufacturer Super X say that they expect to sell quite a few more of their machines in the coming year, so it shouldn't be long before there's a simulator on every street corner! Golly, the mind boggles!

it Alternative

Successful low cost software merchants, Alternative are taking the plunge into the 16 bit market providing Amiga and ST owners with software which (not about [illegible] as cheap as £14.95).

First off the production line is Mad Flunky, an ST follow-up to Piranha's 8 bit [illegible] arcade adventure of a few years back. Like its forerunner, Mad Flunky has been programmed by the man with the biggest sprites in town, Don Priestly. It puts you in the shoes of the same Palace footman, who this time around has to solve puzzles for various regal celebs so that they will hand over their autographs.

Super Speccy Shooting

Gremlin Graphic's forthcoming Dark Fusion looks like it'll keep the shoot 'em up fraternity happy for a while.

Joining the Corps of the Guardian warriors, the player flies over a two-way scrolling landscape blasting the merry hell out of gun emplacements and alien attack craft. No shoot 'em up would be complete without power-ups, and Dark Fusion is no exception. Extra goodies include multiple firepower, jump power and shields, just to give you that edge over the alien hordes. Dark fusion is released in the New Year on the Spectrum, Amstrad and C64, and hopefully we'll be reviewing it next ish.



California Gamin'

Alternative sports sim fans can rejoice and be glad, for Epyx have finally released the Amiga version of one of their finest products, California Games. Six wierd and wonderful west coast sports, namely Half-Pipe Skateboarding, BMX Bike Racing, Roller Skating, Surfing, Frisbee Throwing and Foot Bag Juggling have been very nicely converted into playable computer games which show all the polish of the original C64 version. It's really radical, to use the California Games vernacular, but at £24.99, some of you poorer dudes might find it totally gnarly to get hold of a copy.



COMMODORE 64 CHART

1	Robocop – Ocean
2	Afterburner – Activision
3	Double Dragon – M. House
4	Operation Wolf – Ocean
5	Int. Rugby Sim. – Code Masters
6	Last Ninja 2 – System 3
7	Microprose Soccer – Microprose
8	Giants – US Gold
9	Pro Ski Sim – Code Masters
10	Emlyn Hughes Int. S'cer – A'genic

Robocop knocks the big names into runners-up positions. Last Ninja 2 still hanging in there!

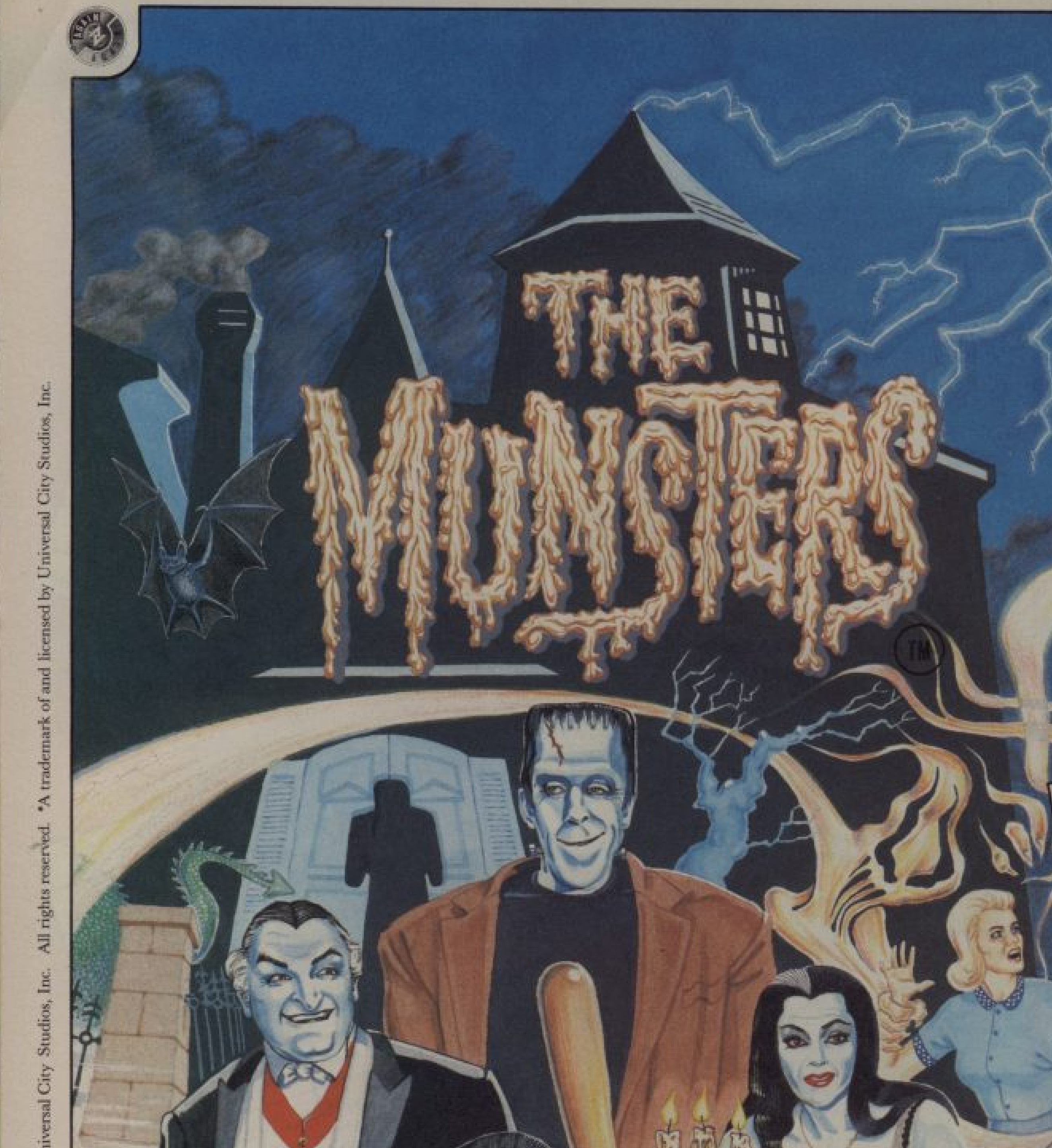
SPECTRUM CHART

1	Robocop – Ocean
2	Afterburner – Activision
3	D. Dragon – Melbourne House
4	Operation Wolf – Ocean
5	Thunderblade – US Gold
6	European Five-a-Side – Silverbird
7	Giants – US Gold
8	Ghostbusters – Ricochet
9	Adv. P'ball Sim. – Code Masters
10	Bombjack – Encore

Blimey! Top four positions exactly the same as the C64 chart? What a lark this 8-bit computing is.

TOP TEN WORST HOLIDAY '89 TV ADS

1	H'seasons Hol (B'tain).
2	Lunn Poly's Get Away Ad.
3	Don't Book It Thomas Cook It.
4	Pontins, Butlins, Centre Parcs.
5	Thomp. Bowler Hatted Gent.
6	Singapore Girl.
7	Club 18-30.
8	Israel.
9	Ireland.
10	And Canada.



From the depths of the darkside, 1313 Mockingbird Ave has been invaded by Ghouls, Zombies, Vampires, Ghosts . . .



Makes your blood run cold doesn't it? Because the munsters are such nice guys Old Nick has decided to teach them a lesson in "ghoulology" and bring them back to the underworld. To this end they have



kidnapped Marilyn – the swines! Herman, Eddie, Grandpa and Lily need your help to rescue her but, can you handle it? The Munsters The Game, based on the television series. This is a multi role all action arcade



game, with superb graphics and gameplay ENJOY IT NOW! Screen shots from AMIGA version.

It's time for Munsters. The first exciting release from AGAIN AGAIN. This haunting game will be available on ATARI ST (£19.99), AMIGA (£19.99), SPECTRUM (£9.99), C64 (£9.99), AMSTRAD (£9.99), MSX (£9.99), AMSTRAD DISC (£14.99), and C64 DISC (£14.99).
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Tel: (0977) 795544 Telex: 557994 RR DIST G Fax: (0977) 790243

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Holy Gunsmoke



Coming soon from Infrogrames is *Wanted*, a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up not entirely unlike *Gunsmoke*. You may remember that US Gold bought the rights to the arcade game, but never released it because the programmers responsible for converting it made such a terrible hash. Hopefully *Wanted* will satisfy all the punters out there who are dying to play a *Gunsmoke*-type game.

It's out now on the ST and Amiga and costs five pence less than £20.

Still Hanging on

At last, Amiga owners can play Super Hang On in their own homes, courtesy of Electric Dreams' conversion team, who are keen to stress that, although the game looks very similar to the ST version, it isn't a straight port-across. In fact, extensive playing by the C+VG lads confirmed this, their conclusive apprasial being that the ST version had the edge in the playability stakes, while the programmers had taken good advantage of the Amiga's superior sound capabilities to produce some pretty funky soundtracks to race along to. Interested? You can try out the game for yourself when it hits the shelves in January, priced at £24.95.



Wozzer? Wozzat?

"Original, addictive, competitive and fun" are what The Wozzer Collection Ltd are calling their new toy, the Wozzer, which they are hoping will become "the new world craze" in 1989. The Wozzer is a staggeringly simple concept – just a rod with a metal ring (or "Rascal" to use the technical term) on it. Just set the Rascal spinning with your thumb and you can have hours of fun trying to keep it going by tilting the Wozzer and passing it from hand to had. As you point it down the Rascal descends, spinning faster and faster as it goes, and that's what keeps the game going. The reaction to the Wozzer in the C + VG office was initially unappreciative, but the toy does hold a strange sort of appeal if you're looking for a mindless diversion, and don't mind shelling out £5.99 for it. "Will it be the next Hula Hoop?" is the question you are all no doubt asking. "Probably not" is our reply.



Win a Wozzer

Intrigued by this innovation in toy technology? We thought you would be, so we arranged for ten lucky readers to indulge in a bit of wozzing at no financial cost to themselves! And not only that – five of the lucky Wozzer winners will be able to wield their Wozzer in the garb for the job – a Wozzer T-shirt! Ow! Woo! Yeah! Etc.

All we want you to do to put you in line for a Wozzer is design the next craze in pointless toys. Just let your imagination run riot and don't let design be hindered by such petty constrictions as cost and compliance with the laws of physics. When you've worked out what it's going to look like, draw us a sketch, give it a suitably wierd name and send it to WOZZITALLABOUT COMPO, C + VG, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU. Make sure it gets to us by February the 16th or you'll have as much chance of winning as Garry Williams has of getting down to tenstones before 1990.

Fax

HIGH RESOLUTIONS

Now that Christmas present has become Christmas past and all that remains of the C+VG festive spirit are the bottles, it's time to get down to some serious self-analysis and come up with a few new year's resolutions. We've collated each member of the team's thoughts on the subject to be put in print, so that the first person to break any of her or his resolutions can be cast into the Elevator of Oblivion, there to spend a thousand eternities being digested in the bowels of C+VG Towers.

PAUL

1. To come up with a devastating, off-the-cuff stoutist insult which will have ad manager Garry Williams running for cover.
2. To pass my driving test and buy the spiffiest little motor on the road.
3. To take up body-building (any donations of Meccano kits or LEGO sets gratefully received).
4. To learn to play blues on the harmonica.
5. To get all my copy in on time . . . Hahaha, no but seriously, folks . . .

LORA

1. To put on a different pair of giant earrings every day.
2. To keep my car as clean as possible without rubbing off the paint.
3. To take loads and loads of piccies with the utterly wicked camera I got for Christmas.
4. To plug Garry's chair into the mains and put a switch on my desk so that I can fry his botty every time he breaks into song.
5. To keep myself fit by going on a high fibre diet – there should certainly be a lot of running involved!

GARRY

1. To sell an ad page to anyone who rings me up.
2. To lose no weight at all.
3. To maintain my image as a charming, intelligent, devilishly witty man-about-town who is just irresistable to beautiful young ladies.
4. To sit on anyone who tries to insinuate that I'm fat by referring to me as chubby, over-sized, well-upholstered, portly or "C+VG's very own Mr Creosote".
5. To bring Arsenal good luck by attending every match in my official capacity as Honorary Team Mascot.

EUGENE

1. To stop watching Bulls Eye. Its rubbish. I don't know why I started.
2. To give up Nine McNuggetss with large fries and bar-b-q sauce.
3. To drink less Tennants Extra and more Tennants L.A.
4. To stop blaming the ref, pitch, weather, team injuries, or anything else every time Bristol City lose.
5. To make C+VG even better than it already is.

JO

1. To sell at least twenty ads a day, thus keeping a smile on Garry's wobbling lips.
2. To buy a set of chest expanders and build up those pectorals.
3. To crack a lot more of those crappy Christmas cracker jokes which keep the editorial department in stitches.
4. To drive the Ed wild by calling him "Eugey-baby" at every opportunity.
5. To have my hair done like Julian's.

JULIAN

1. To stop being cruel to dumb animals, like Fatty Williams.
2. To learn Japanese.
3. To stop being crude. Well, not ALL the time.
4. To stop letting my Lion loose on the tube during the Rush Hour.
5. To chop my ponytail off and have a side parting. And if you believe that you'll believe anything . . .

Charts

AMIGA TOP TEN

1	Elite – Firebird.
2	D. Dragon – Melbourne House.
3	Pacmania – Grand Slam.
4	Lombard RAC Rally – Mandarin.
5	Out Run – Sega/US Gold.
6	Return of the Jedi – Domark.
7	Thunderblade – US Gold.
8	Rocket Ranger – Mirrorsoft.
9	Interceptor – Electronic Arts.
10	Starglider II – Rainbird.

Firebird's Elite takes pole position – beating off strong challenges from a number of hot coin-op conversions.

ALL FORMATS COMBINED TOP TEN

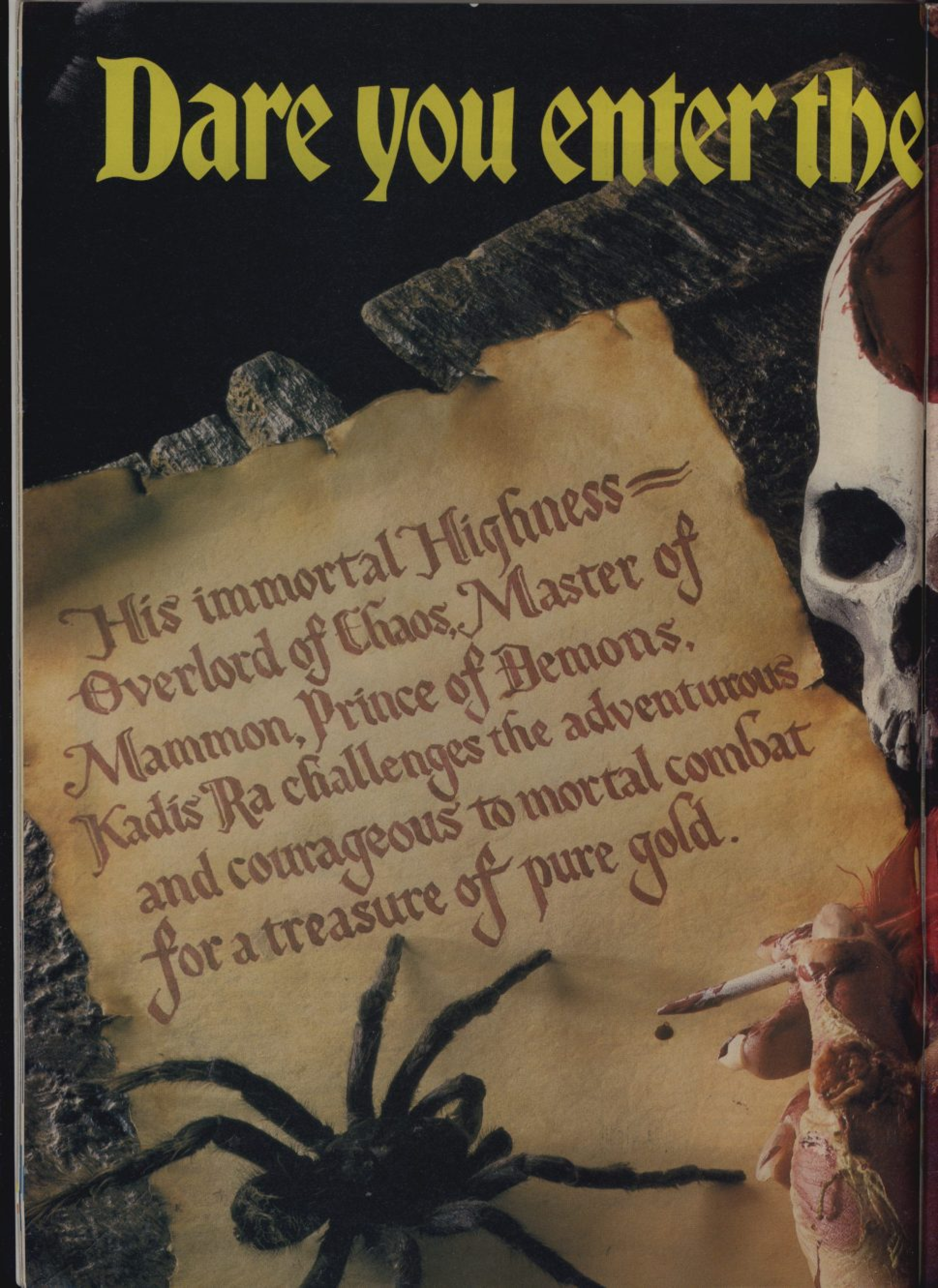
1	Operation Wolf – Ocean.
2	Robocop – Ocean.
3	D. Dragon – Melbourne House.
4	Thunderblade – US Gold.
5	Giants – US Gold.
6	Batman – Ocean.
7	R-Type – Electric Dreams.
8	F'tball M'ger II – A'tive Games.
9	Falcon – Mirrorsoft.
10	Last Ninja II – System 3.

This is it. The official Xmas '88 number one. Ocean steal the number one and two slots. Melbourne surprise a few people by beating Thunderblade into the number four slot with cult beat 'em up – Double Dragon.

ATARI ST TOP TEN

1	Falcon – Mirrorsoft.
2	Operation Wolf – Ocean.
3	Afterburner – Activision.
4	D. Dragon – Melbourne House.
5	R-Type – Electric Dreams.
6	Elite – Firebird.
7	Hostages – Infogrames.
8	Thunderblade – US Gold.
9	Lombard RAC Rally – Mandarin.
10	ST Game Creator – Mandarin.

The superb F17 flight simulator from Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft takes a deserved number one slot in the ST charts – again beating off strong challenges from coin-op conversions.


Dare you enter the
His immortal Highness
Overlord of Chaos, Master of
Mammon, Prince of Demons,
Kadis Ra challenges the adventurous
and courageous to mortal combat
for a treasure of pure gold.

...e game of your life?

Welcome strangers to the fantasy world of Fist, the ultimate game of heroic adventure. Within a vast dark labyrinth you must pit your wits against the hideous legions of the undead. Here hidden riches of great worth will reward the skilled and daring, swift death the faint of heart.

Fist is a stunningly realistic adventure challenge crafted by genius game-master Steve Jackson and the computer wizardry of Computerdial Limited.

Discover an entirely new concept of fantasy gaming, an awesomely different world that awaits beyond your telephone. Dial Fist and you unlock a living, breathing, terror stalked world of medieval fantasy.

You are a warrior within this thrillingly realistic adventure, that you control every step of the way simply by using the numbers on your telephone; while a trusted guide offers action advice and the corresponding numbers that determine your moves.

True skills are needed to best creatures of cruel cunning, as corpses slither, zombies screech, fireballs sizzle and vampires hiss.

A boundless sound adventure that bursts to life within your reeling imagination. As broadsword in hand you hack your way through hellish screaming hoards towards a fortune in real gold pieces. Or at very least the glory of a gruesomely good Fist tee shirt.

But beware, the evil empire does not easily give up such riches. And although many brave adventurers have entered this doom laden labyrinth, few have returned to tell.

The gauntlet is cast down, take up the blade and dare to dial the adventure of your life.

HINTS ON PLAY

Use Fist's limbo option to store your character for up to four weeks.

Simply dial 9 at any time during the adventure. Your limbo code allows you to stop and start your game at your leisure without having to begin again. You will return to where you left off the next time you call. Limbo saves you time and money!

Keep a pencil and paper ready to draw up a map of the dungeon and keep track of your choices.

Dial 0 to repeat messages and dial 9 to hear your character status report.

(Inventory, provisions, stamina and option to store your character in limbo.)

Send for your free adventurer's pack today for the background and rules to the game, a membership form for the adventurer's guild, information on how to get a tone dialler (helps speed up the adventure if you have a rotary/pulse phone) and news of the latest FIST developments. Send an A4 sized s.a.e. to:

Fist, Co. Computerdial Limited, 7 Leapale Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4JU.

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Calls charged at 25p per minute cheap and 38p per minute peak and standard.

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Now that's Magic!

Digital Magic are positively bursting with words like "incredible", "arcade quality" and "action packed". Well, cynics at C + VG take such claims with a couple of tubs of Sifta Sam's Super Salt, especially when they are claims made by the manufacturer, and even more especially when the manufacturer is a newsomer. However, one look at the accompanying screenshots and even we were prepared to venture some small interest in the two games, Trained Assassin and Scorpion. The former game is a four-way scrolling, five level Amiga shoot 'em up with ten pick-up weapons to use on a vast array of aliens and huge end-of-level mother ships.

Scorpion is what DMS call "a fast moving arcade platform shoot 'em up, with bone-cracking combat". There has to be something for everybody there. Both games will be launched on the Amiga on January 28th, with ported-over ST versions to follow.

Voyage to the Bottom of the Toy Fair

January 28th is a date marked by many asterisks in the Filofaxes of British toy industry executives, it being the first day of the British International Toy and Hobby Fair.

The 1989 show stopper will be Texas Instruments' Voyager. The Voyager is a microprocessor-operated 'intelligence' buried within a pair of headphones connected to a wrap-around microphone. The computer talks to the player through headphones, asking questions and playing word games, but the really whizzo thing about Voyager is that you can talk back to the game, which understands a grand total of four words! Now that might not sound a lot, but this is the first toy of its kind to feature such a form of interaction, and Texas Instruments, are already trying to upgrade the system to understand 16 words. And if the technology is developed to its full potential it could change the face of all forms of computer gaming . . . but we'll just have to see, won't we?





The toy industry is also witnessing a revival of the handheld games which were so popular back in the early 80s. The new wave hand helds feature scrolling screens and suchlike. It's surprising that console manufacturers Nintendo won't be showing off their wares at the show, even though their consoles and cartridges accounted for about half of the total toy sales in the USA last year. According to certain sources, this is because toy distributors are very wary about handling anything which might be connected with computers – a market which experience has taught them is very volatile.

Similarly, the series of light phaser guns (Lazer Tag, Photon Warrior, etc) won't be making an appearance at the show. Allegedly, this type of toy has been avoided by distributors ever since the tragic Hungerford massacre of Summer '87 which made parents stop buying guns and other "violent" toys for their kids. This has also meant that the motorised water pistols which were such a big hit last year have adopted a much lower profile, to the extent that manufacturers have been painting their fake UZI 9mms in a less aggressive shade of yellow, rather than khaki. What a bunch of wimps.



ic!



Haven't got a Clue? EA Have

Fed up with languishing in dungeons, being beaten up by Ninjas or mutating horribly in radioactive deserts? Gosh – you need a change of lifestyle. If, however, your problems lie Bard's Tale (all three games), Deathlord, Wasteland, Mars Saga and Sentinel Worlds then EA have a useful book, or two. Each one contains maze maps, item and weapon guides and loads of general hints and tips which make them all "essential reading for any roleplayer". That's what EA say, anyway, and who are we to argue? Interested parties should contact EA on 0753 46465.

...son in Custody

While the other
big software names are putting
their shirts on arcade conversions
and other licenses. Hewson are going to be
spending the first few months of 1989 releasing
a h p of originals. On the Amiga/ST we should soon see Custodian
an Astaroth. Custodian is a fast-scrolling megablast designed and
progra med by the same team who are working on Verminator for Firebird
he gan s played in three 250 screen tombs which you have to clear of alien
para es, using the vast cache of weapons at your disposal. Astaroth –
he An of Death – is a flick-screen arcade adventure set in a labyrinthine
ypt pa ed with treaures to collect and mythical monsters to kill. Ozymandis,
tless b and and hero of the piece must also do battle with Astaroth herself –
f Deat Oooh! In case you're wondering (we bet you're not, but we'll tell you anyway)
a proc of the deranged mind of programmer Mark Dawon, also responsible for 8-bit
Node: yesod and Robin of the Wood.





is also e on 16 bit which, as you can see from our screenshots, looks pretty darned spiffy.
among u are also well catered for with the release of Raf Cecco's fairy-freeing arcade adventure
conver n of 3D blast, Eliminator, to the Spectrum, Commodore and Amstrad. Commodore owning
uffs m be pleased to hear that Hewson are releasing some souped-up versions of their
Braybrook classics, called Gribbly's Special Day Out and Heavy
metal Paradroid. Also coming soon from Rack-it are
Zamzara, the next game from Netherworld author,
Jukka Tapanimaki, and Steel from
Imperial Software whose former game,
Slayer, received much acclaim
amongst Commodore owners.

Hello Willow



US company Mindscape are soon to be releasing Willow, a game based on the hit Lucasfilm movie. The game, like the film, centres on the adventures of the diminuitive hero Willow Ufgood who finds and adopts an abandoned baby. But this is no ordinary sprog. This is Elora Dan, the child destined to overthrow the evil queen Bavmorda. Wicked Bavmorda, is a mistress of all kinds of mystical arts and knows of the baby's threat and has sent out armies of soldiers to retrieve Elora Dan so that her soul can be banished for ever. Bitch.

Willow, the game, is divided into seven subgames which consist of adventuring and arcade action, taking Willow, Elora Dan and other characters from the film through dungeons, forests and ice caverns all packed with Bavmorda's guards, nasty Nockmarrs and other monsters. Mindscape are planning to release the game on the Amiga, ST, C64 and PC very soon in Britain.

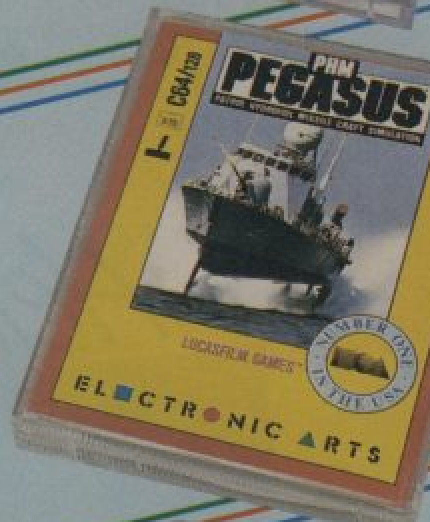
Test your skills on Land, Sea & Air or explore new Adventures

COMMODORE CASSETTE SOFTWARE OF QUALITY AND EXCELLENCE



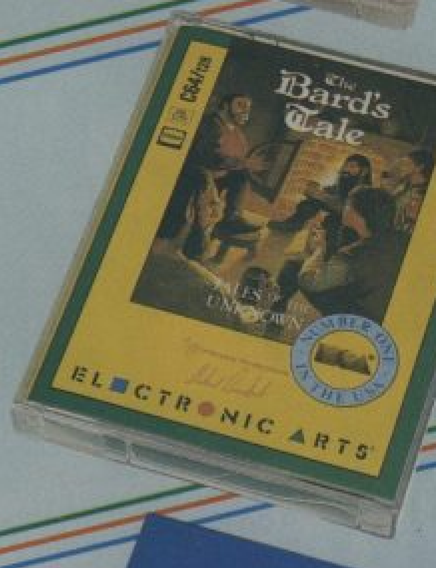


SKATE OR DIE.
"Flawless in-game presentation . . . Animation as smooth as silk . . . Tremendous title tune . . . Easy enough to pick up and play."
OVERALL 92% . . . "Without doubt a brilliant sports simulation . . ."
ZZAP **Zzap Sizzler**



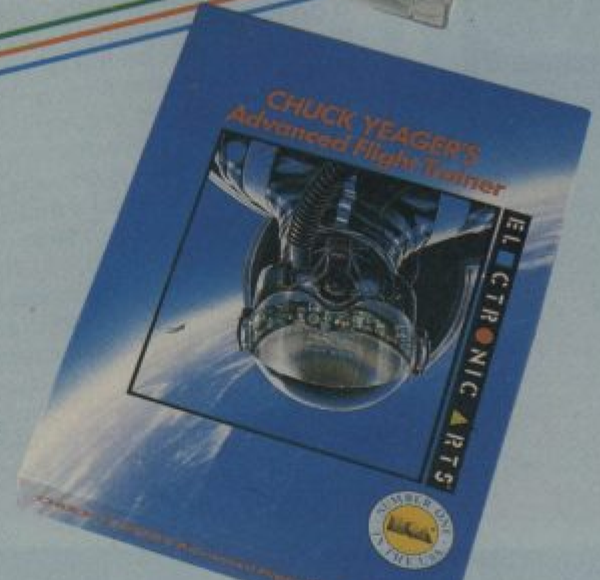


PHM PEGASUS.
". . . Pegasus achieves just the right mix of complexity, realism and impressive graphics to keep you hooked."
COMMODORE USER.
"In the past mixing simulation and arcade action has not always worked, but in PHM Pegasus the combination has paid off."
THE GAMES MACHINE.





THE BARD'S TALE I.
". . . If you are looking for a real challenge, a real fantasy quest, and a brilliant game to boot, it does not get better than this."
POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY.





CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER.
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OVERALL 95% . . . "The most enjoyable flight simulator available for the 64."
ZZAP **Zzap Sizzler**

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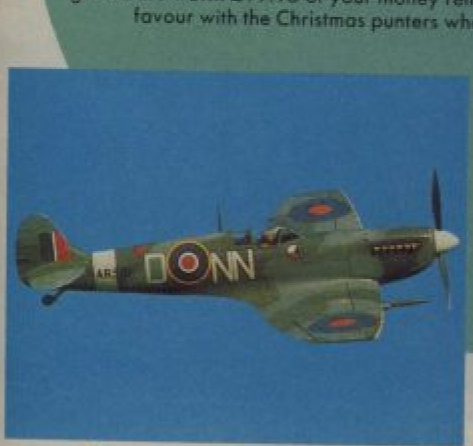
Dragon's Lair Ready

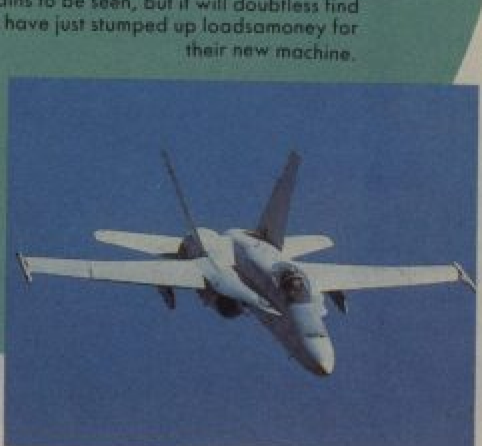
A new Canadian outfit, Readysoft, have programmed Dragon's Lair on the Amiga, though whether this is anything to do with the similarly named classic laser disc video game is a question which few people seem qualified to answer.
What we do know, however, is that the game comes on no less than six disks and will cost a whopping £44.95. Big bucks and no mistakes.



Fly Boys

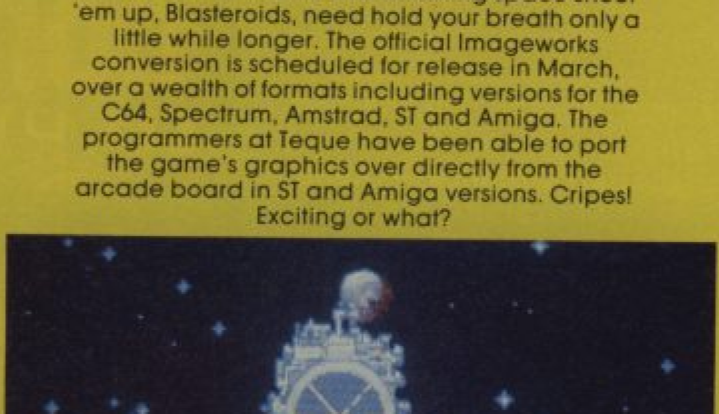
The game Cascade are keenest to talk about for '89 is a flight simulation called "The RAF Flight Simulation." RAF? Yes, Cascade have been working with our flyboys and their huge, super-realistic, expensive flight simulators to produce what they're calling "the ultimate flight simulator." Cascade hope to be basing the game, sorry, simulator on the workings of three or more contemporary warplanes, so you can go on training flights in a Hawker Siddeley Hawk one minute, then climb into same top secret superplane, flying stealth bombing missions over distant shores. And all without leaving your armchair, as they say. Software veterans amongst you may remember Cascade's Cassette 50, a compilation of 50 no-frills games which sold for a tenner a few years back. Well, now Cascade are repeating the venture, this time with their eyes firmly on the wallets of ST owners. Disk 15 is the soul-stirring title of the pack, which contains (you guessed it) 15 games old and new, all of which are best described as the "Standards and Classics" of computer gaming – Backgammon, dinky little space shoot 'em ups, you know the sort of thing. Whether or not 15 of these sorts of games are worth £19.95 of your money remains to be seen, but it will doubtless find favour with the Christmas punters who have just stumped up loadsamoney for their new machine.





Blasteroids Blasts in

All you fans of Atari's rock-wrecking space shoot 'em up, Blasteroids, need hold your breath only a little while longer. The official Imageworks conversion is scheduled for release in March, over a wealth of formats including versions for the C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, ST and Amiga. The programmers at Teque have been able to port the game's graphics over directly from the arcade board in ST and Amiga versions. Cripes! Exciting or what?



Eight-bit owners needn't feel left out either, because the graphics on all the other conversions have had hours of work lavished on them, recreating the look of the arcade game. The Imageworks propaganda machine also claims that just as much effort has been put into keeping the gameplay as addictive as it was on the coin op, and bearing in mind the basic simplicity of the game, this shouldn't be too difficult to manage. Reviews next issue.

Speccy Fire and Forget

On the road from Titus is Fire and Forget on the Spectrum, bringing road blasting thrills to your monochromatic screen for only £8.99.



C+VG REVIEWS



EUGENE 'EUGE' LACEY
C+VG's voice of experience, Euge remembers the pre-calculator days, and has been in the computer industry since the Spectrum was a twinkle in Clive Sinclair's eye! He's a shoot 'em up and arcade adventure fan.
FAVE GAMES: Serve and Volley, Y'S, Shadow Warrior.



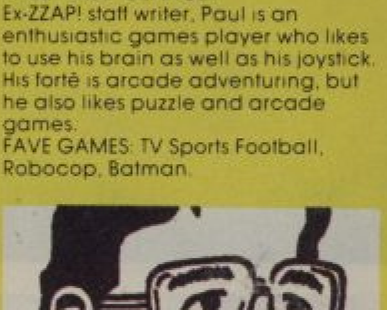
JULIAN 'JAZ' RIGNALL
Ex-ZZAP! Editor, Jaz is an arcade freak who owns more computers and consoles than an average software shop! When he's not down Brighton Pier, he's usually playing a shoot 'em up or good arcade adventure at home!
FAVE GAMES: Arcade Robocop, Y'S, TV Sports Football.



CIARAN 'CORKY' BRENNAN
Another ex-ZZAP! Editor, who also worked as Dep Ed on Your Sinclair. Ciaran is a no-nonsense gamesplayer who knows good from bad – and will tell you so.
FAVE GAMES: TV Sports Football, Baal, Cosmic Pirate.

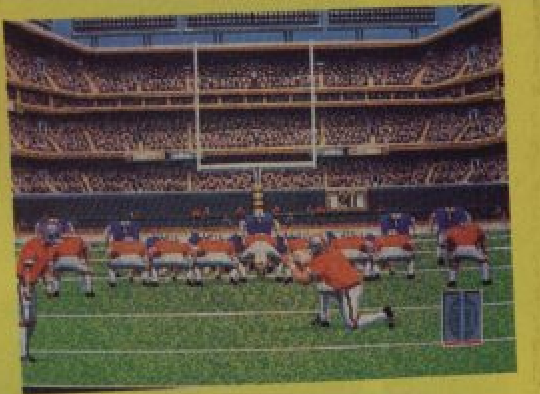


PAUL 'PAUL' GLANCEY
Ex-ZZAP! staff writer, Paul is an enthusiastic games player who likes to use his brain as well as his joystick. His forté is arcade adventuring, but he also likes puzzle and arcade games.
FAVE GAMES: TV Sports Football, Robocop, Batman.



TONY 'DILDOID' DILLON
He's a real hard man is our Tony. He loves staying up all night and listening to heavy metal music on his Dansette. He also loves weilding a joystick and is oft found headbanging to the latest RPG or arcade game.
FAVE GAMES: Batman, Times of Lore, Falcon ST

C+VG HITS!
TV SPORTS FOOTBALL 30
Cinemaware's stunning American football simulation is a Hit!





BATMAN 52
Holy, Cremola! The Spectrum version of Batman has been awarded a C+VG Bat-hit!



COSMIC PIRATE 58
This brilliant new Amiga arcade game offers more than an average shoot 'em up. And it looks and sounds incredible!

OTHERS

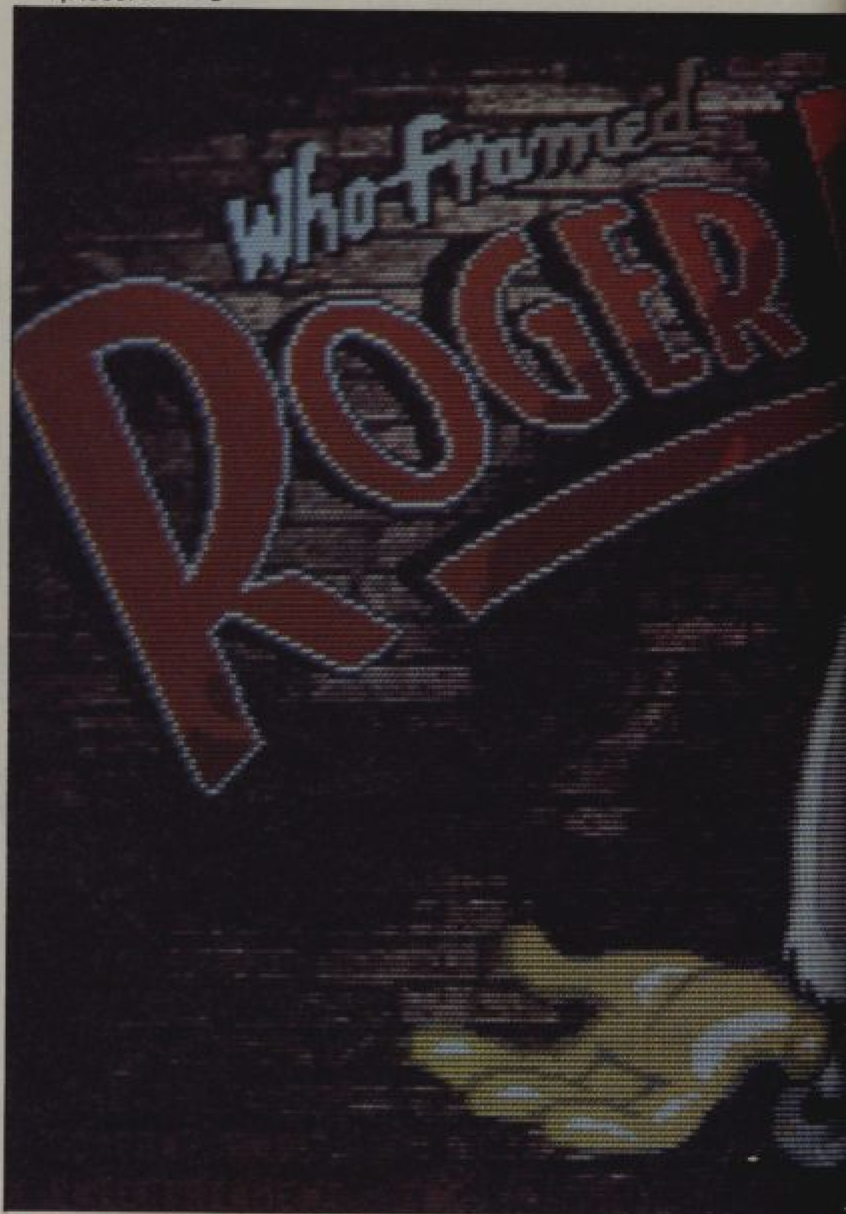




Reviews

WHO F
ROG

▼ Heeere's Roger.

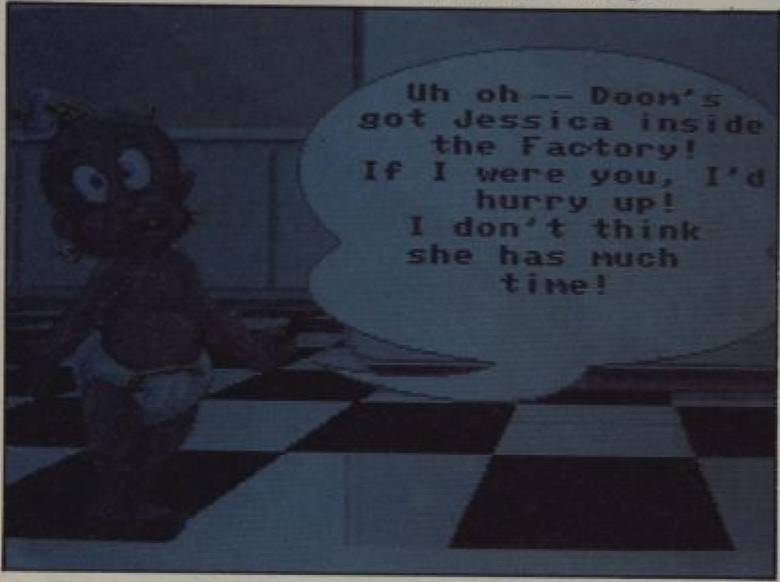


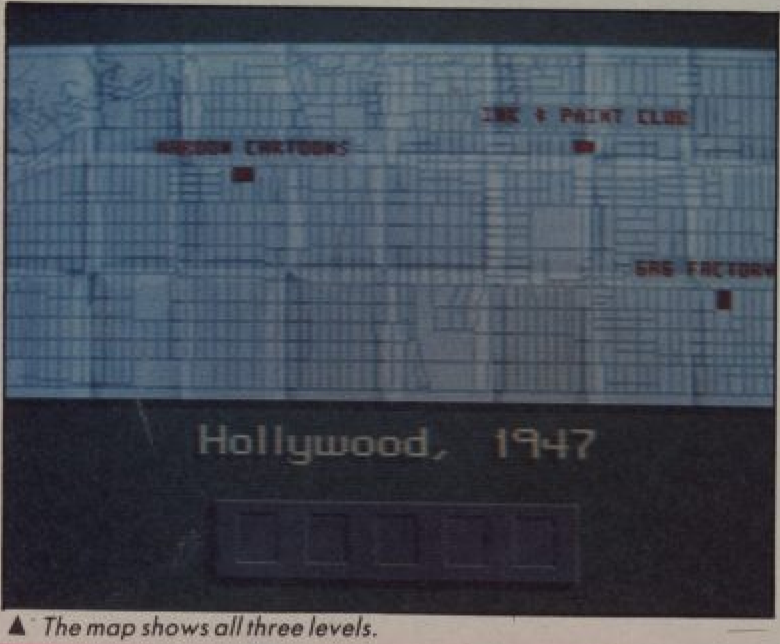
RAB

► MACHINES: ST/AMIGA/C64/IBM PC.
► SUPPLIER: BUENA VISTA/ACTIVISION.
► VERSION TESTED: AMIGA.
► REVIEWER: JULIAN RIGNALL.

Who Framed Roger Rabbit is one of the most innovative films in decades. It mixes live action and animation in an unprecedented fashion. Actors talk and interact with cartoon characters – or toons as they're called – in a thoroughly convincing and realistic fashion. The effect is stunning, and it's no wonder that the film is breaking box-office records. And since it's doing so well, it's not surprising that a computer game tie-in should appear.

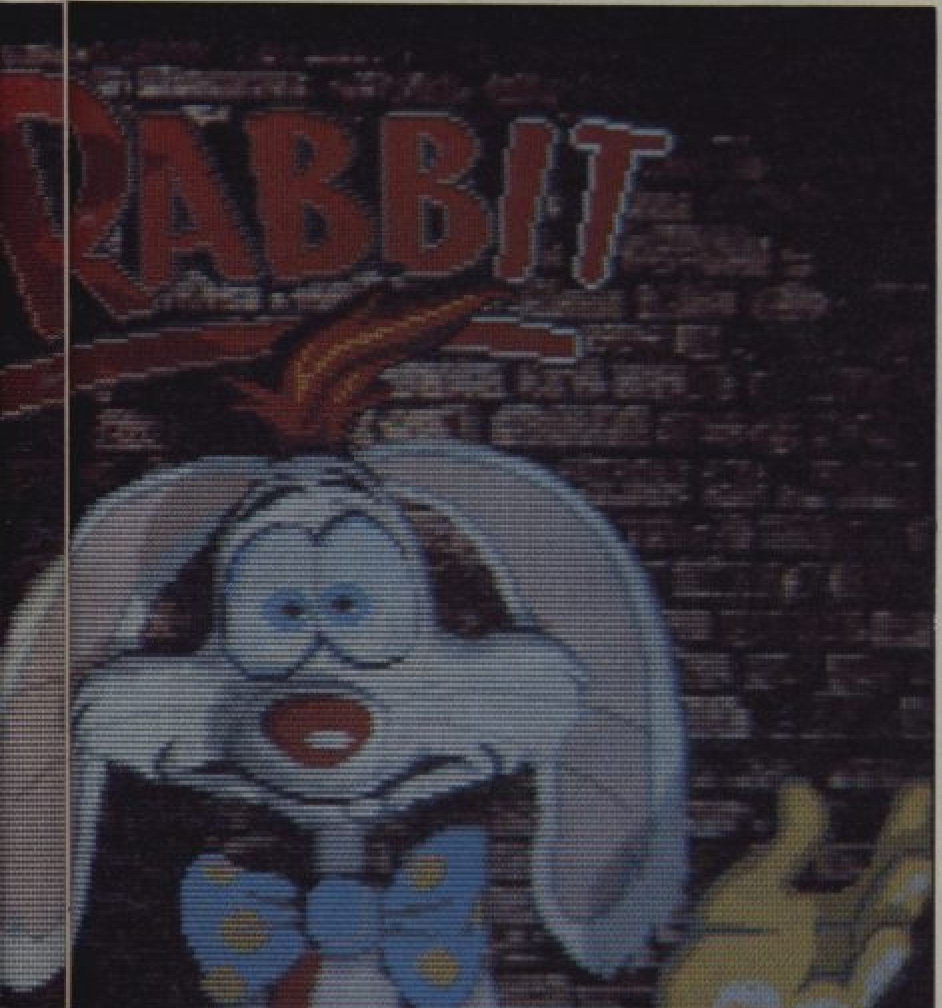
The film is set in Los Angeles in 1947, a place and time where toons and human beings co-exist in a real-world environment. Eddie Valiant is a private detective who's down on his luck and is fast becoming a chronic alcoholic. He's hired by RK Maroon – the owner of Maroon Cartoons, where all the toons work – to take pictures of Jessica Rabbit in a compromising position with Marvin Acme, the incredibly successful inventor who's responsible for all Acme products – you must have seen them in cartoons (the Acme portable hole, the Acme giant magnet, or even the Acme rocket-powered roller skates). This Valiant does not realise the effect it'll have on Roger



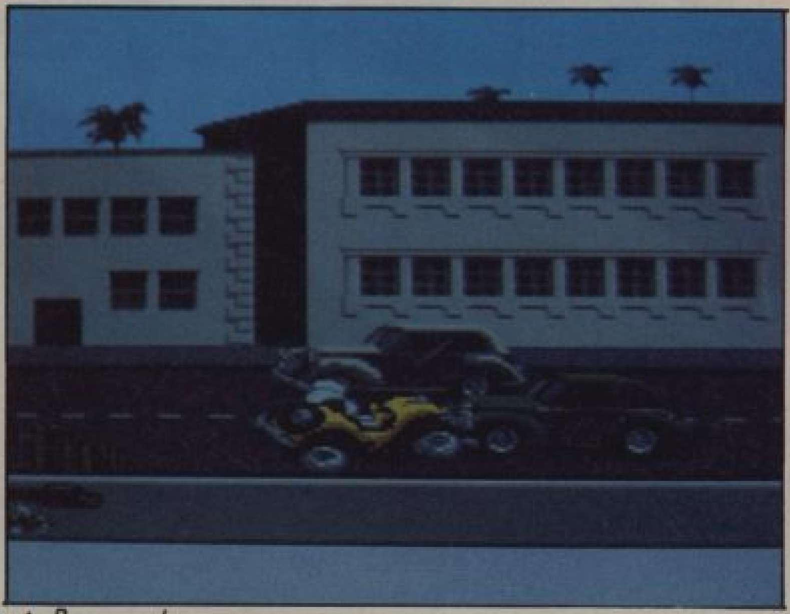


▲ The map shows all three levels.

RAMED
GER



BBIT



▲ *Roger rushes across town.*



▲ *See what happens when you drink.*

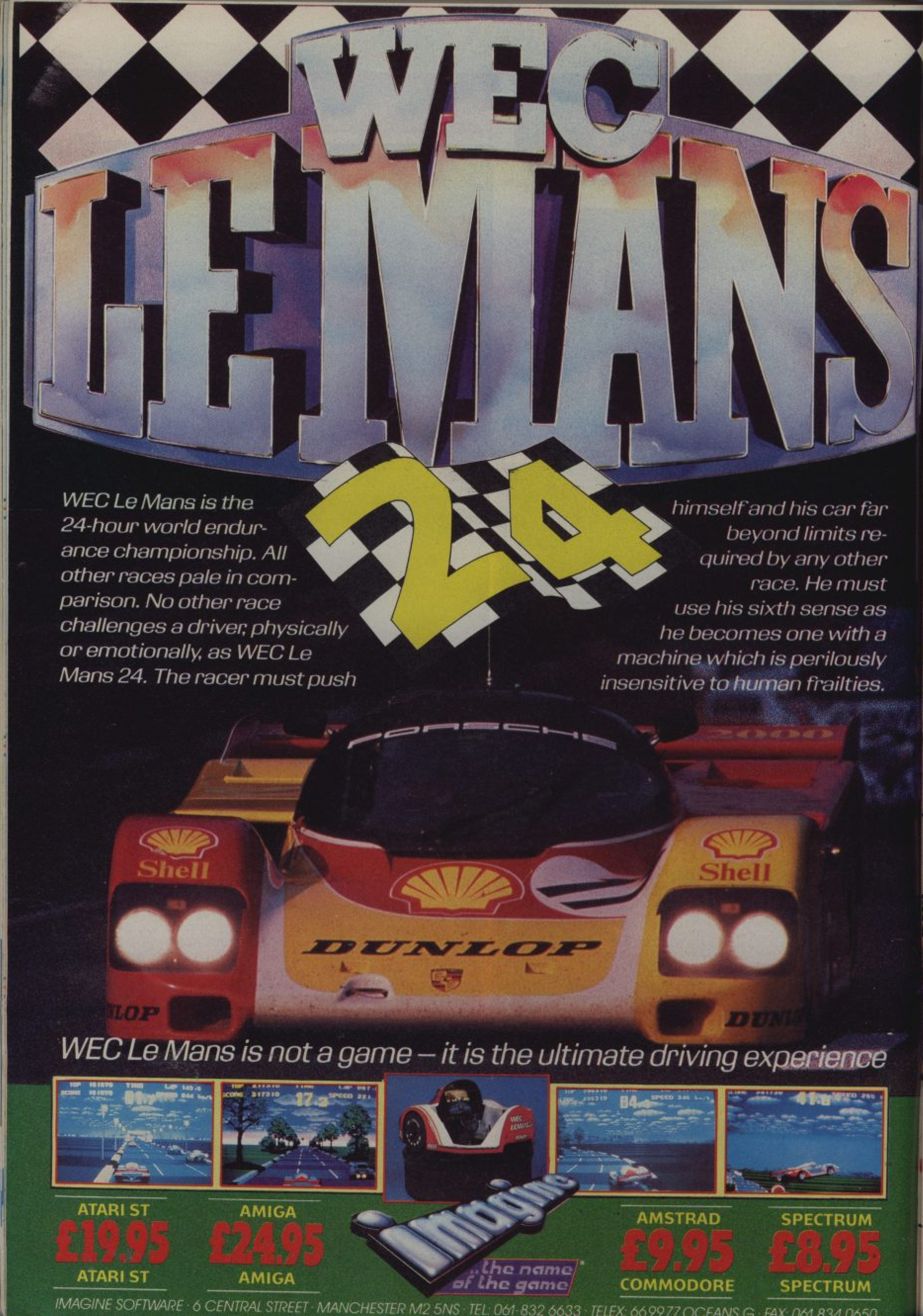
Rabbit, Jessica's leporine husband. He is distraught when he finds out that his wife is an adultress, and swears that he'll make Jessica love him again – whatever the cost – before he rushes out into the night. Later on it's discovered that Acme has been murdered, and the blame instantly falls on Roger Rabbit. But he didn't do it, did he? And Eddie Valiant decides to find out who framed Roger Rabbit.

The people behind the computer version of Roger Rabbit are Buena Vista, a subsidiary of Disney who were associated with some of the main animated features like Jungle Book, Snow White and the Seven Dwarves and Fantasia. Their game-of-the-film is presented and plays very much like a Cinemaware product, and incorporates dazzling introductory and intermission screens, and plenty of disk swapping.

There are three levels in all, each representing a scene from the film.

When the game first loads you're treated to a film-style introductory sequence with credits and a marvellous piece of music. After that Baby Herman, one of the top toon stars, appears to give instructions. According to him, Marvin Acme's will has been lost, and it must be found within an hour, otherwise Toontown (where all the toons live) will become the property of the evil Judge Doom – who has plans to destroy it. So the will must be found – and Roger Rabbit is the only one capable of doing so.

The first level is a race from Eddie Valiant's office to the Pen and Ink club, where Acme lost the will. Roger drives down the horizontally scrolling road



WEC LE MANS
24
WEC Le Mans is the 24-hour world endurance championship. All other races pale in comparison. No other race challenges a driver, physically or emotionally, as WEC Le Mans 24. The racer must push himself and his car far beyond limits required by any other race. He must use his sixth sense as he becomes one with a machine which is perilously insensitive to human frailties.
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ROGER RABBIT

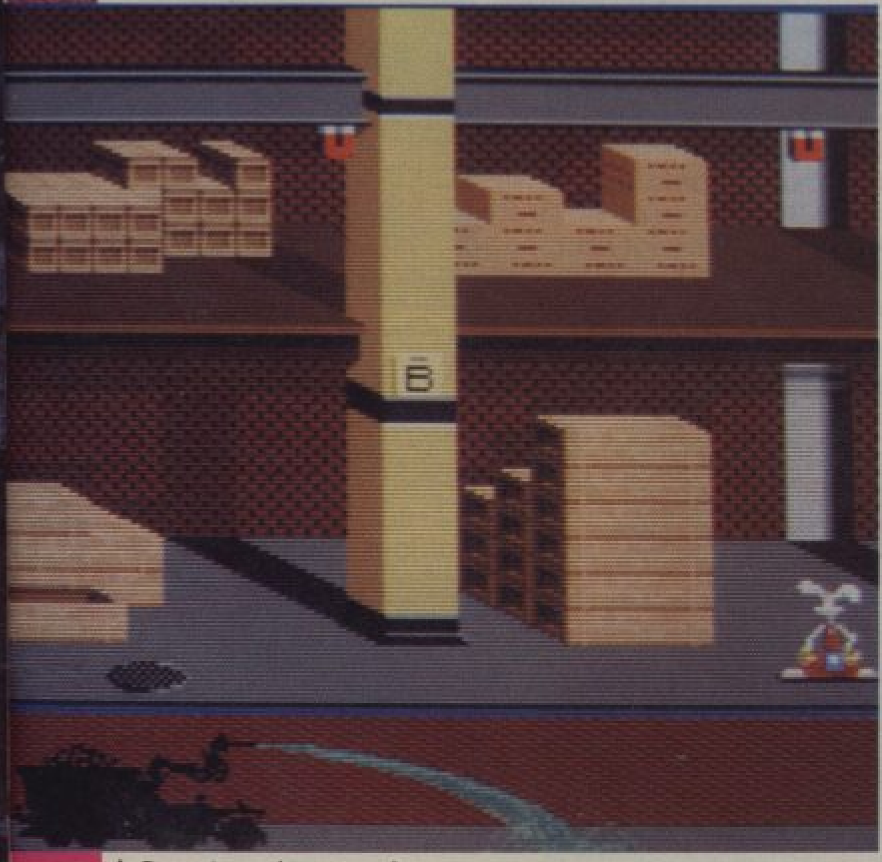
in Benny the Cab, a toon taxi, avoiding oncoming cars and red trams by switching from one lane to the other. There are also pools of Dip – an acetate derivative that's deadly to toons – which have to be avoided at all costs, since skidding into one results in the loss of one of Roger's five lives. Just to add a little pressure, the wicked Weasels, Judge Doom's cronies, give chase throughout the level – and a life is lost if they get to the club before Roger.

The next level is set inside the club, and Roger has to run around all the tables picking up paper napkins – one of them is the will, but Acme has written it in invisible ink. Making the task even harder are the waiter penguins which rush around regularly replacing the napkins; Roger also has to make sure he doesn't pick up drinks accidentally – that sends him into a mega-fit and he rushes around and leaps into the air in a brialliantly animated sequence that's just like the film! It also costs him a life. And if you think that's tough enough, a gorilla patrols the club and throttles Roger if he crosses his path, losing yet another life in the process.

Grab all the napkins and it's off to Acme's gag factory for the final showdown with evil Judge Doom. It's up to you to make sure that Roger is cleared and let true love prevail by uniting Roger with Jessica – fail and Judge Doom has the last laugh.



▲ *Nissed as a pewt.*



▲ *Doom's machine gets closer to Jessica.*

Roger Rabbit is fun to play, but unfortunately relies far too much on its stunning graphics and digitised sound effects and tunes – the actual gameplay is very simplistic. The three levels are tough, especially the latter two, but I'd have liked more – the film was tailor-made for a computer game.

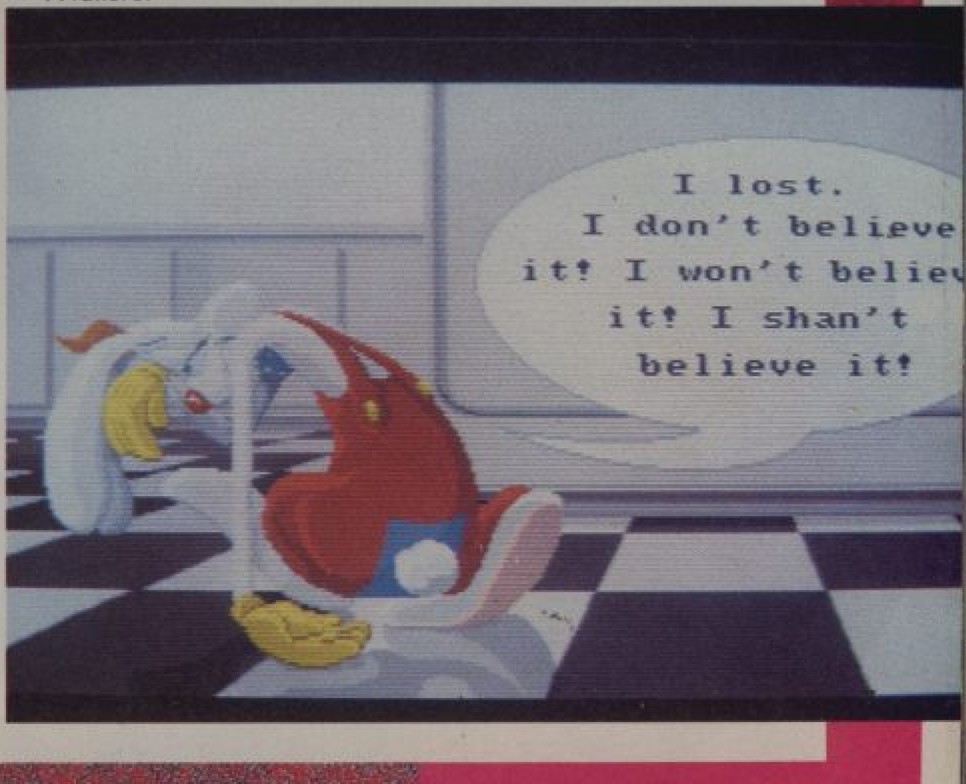
What's there is good, and is bound to appeal to fans of the film, but in the end I was left with the distinct impression that Buena haven't fully capitalised on this golden opportunity. With the addition of a few more levels of the same quality, Roger Rabbit could have been transformed from a good game to a brilliant one.

AMIGA	
► GRAPHICS	88%
► SOUND	86%
► PLAYABILITY	59%
► **OVERALL**	**58%**

UPDATE . . .

Because of the game's simplistic nature, it should translate to all systems pretty well – there'll be differences in graphics and sound on the less powerful machines of course, but the basic gameplay will be the same.

▼ *A failure.*



WHO DONE

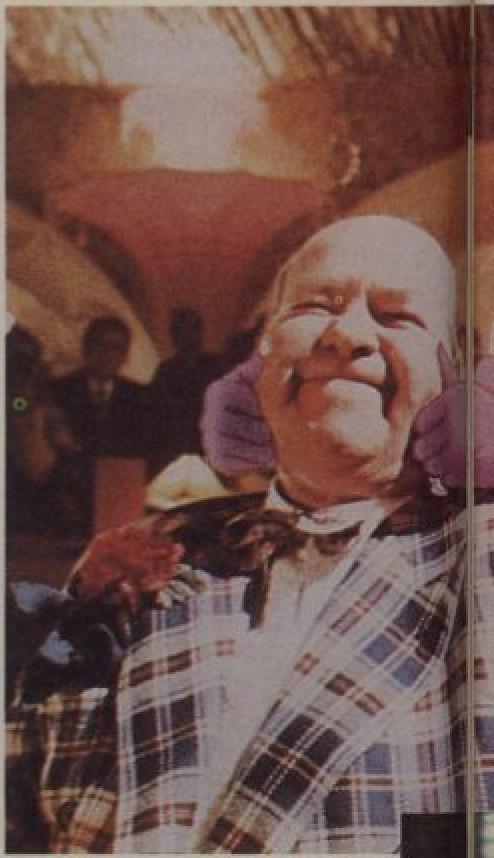
Mixing animation with live action on film is nothing new — Disney did it with his Alice in Cartoonland series back in 1923, Gene Kelly danced with Jerry the Mouse in Anchors Aweigh (1945), and more recently Mary Poppins and Bedknobs and Broomsticks had actors interacting with cartoon characters. However, never has the illusion been more convincing than with the stunning new film, Who Framed Roger Rabbit. Julian Rignall discovers how it was done.



▲ *Jessica.*

Who Framed Roger Rabbit is a joint production between Walt Disney's Touchstone Pictures and Steven Speilberg's Amblin Entertainment – and with that pedigree, it's not surprising that the film is one of the most innovative in years.

The film was directed by Robert Zemekis (who also directed the superb Back to the Future and Romancing the Stone), and he contracted the finest talent to bring the ingenious Roger Rabbit concept to fruition. The visual effects were given to Industrial Light and Magic, the Oscar-winning special FX team who did the FX for the Star Wars films, ET, Indiana Jones and Innerspace (among others), while the animation team was headed by Richard Williams, who did the animated sequences for Casino Royal and several of the



▲ *Cheeky!*

Pink Panther films – he also worked on the Fanta adverts that feature Disney characters mixed with live actors.

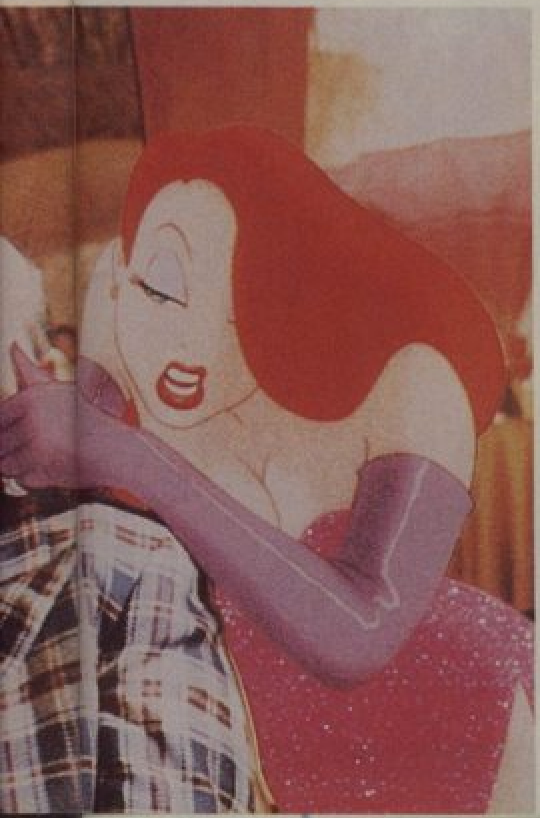
At first Williams was dubious about doing a film that mixed actors and cartoons, thinking instantly of the Mary Poppins-type where the actors looked very out of place. However, Zemeckis persuaded him to work on a test film where an actor interacted with Roger Rabbit on some stairs, and the result convinced him – as well as executive Producer Steven Spielberg. "When I first saw the tests for Roger Rabbit," he says. "I was – and this is not an overstatement – astonished".

With a green light from Disney, work started . . . The first big problem was to make a reality where humans and cartoons – or



▲ Bob

E IT??



toons as they're called in the film – interact realistically, in other words to appear *IN* the film, and not look as though they've been painted onto it.

The film was shot in London and Los Angeles, and in both places the actors played scenes with empty spaces – the toons were drawn in at a later date by the team of animators.

It was working with thin air that caused starring actor Bob Hoskins some problems, so to help him imagine that he was talking to real characters, stand-up comic Charles Fleischer was brought in to provide the voice of Roger Rabbit live on-set. Hoskins also rehearsed with a life-sized Roger Rabbit dummy!



▲ *Bob n' Roj.*



▲ *What's up Doc.*



▲ *Bob Hoskins acts with a tap . . .*



▲ *But things look a lot better with a Toon!*



WHO DONE IT??





▲ *Before – and after.*

If acting with non-existent characters was difficult, getting these spectres to interact with live objects seemed almost inconceivable – but not to Industrial Light and Magic, who employed special effects which were more complex than those in many top-grossing films such as ET, Indiana Jones and Return of the Jedi.

To give the impression that toons were interacting with live objects, tiny robot arms were developed to manipulate objects – the toons were then drawn over them to make it look as though they were carrying the items, or even "handling" them to the live actors! In one scene a pelican is seen riding a real bike – this was done by filling the bike's wheels with water for stability and then sending it freewheeling across the set, guided by an invisible wire.

The work involved was incredible – in one scene where Bob Hoskins walks through a studio lot encountering various toons, 180 different elements were required to put it all together!

In all, there were over a thousand visual effects, and 57 minutes of interactive cartoon sequences – and the overall effect is absolutely stunning. Who Framed Roger Rabbit is an incredible film – make sure you don't miss it.



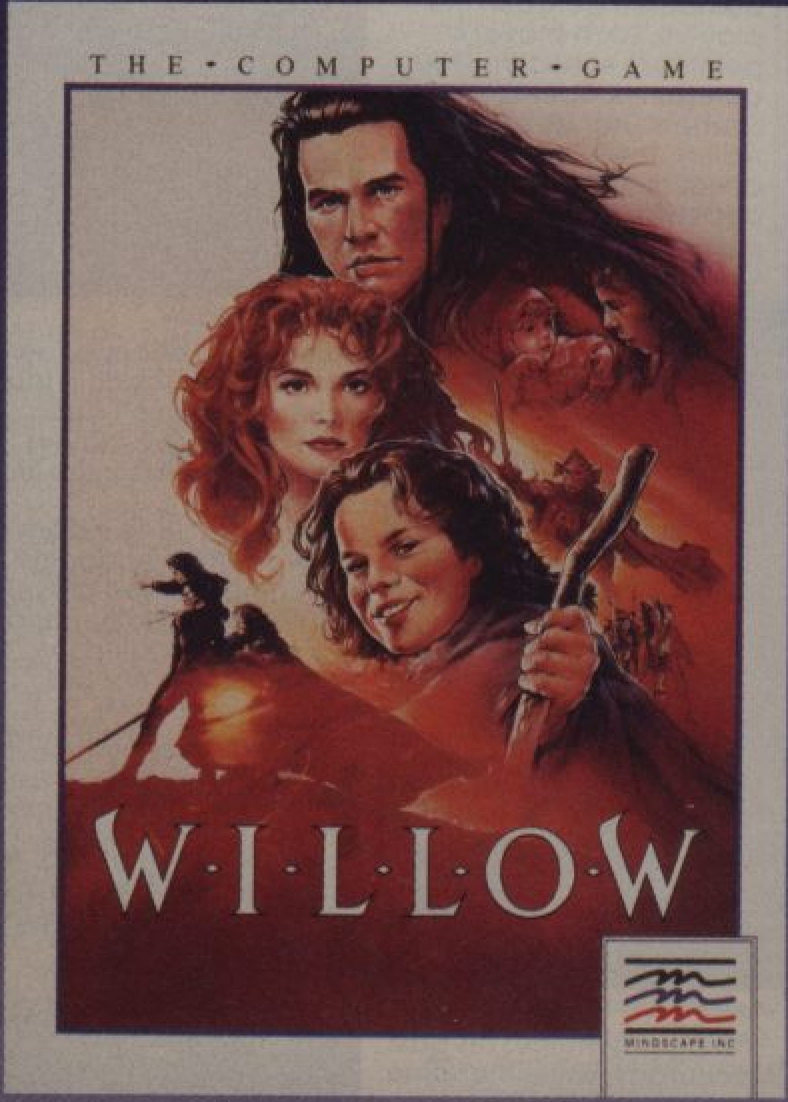
▲ *Bob kitted out.*



▲ *Marvin Acme plays patty-cake with Jessica.*

W·I·L·L·O·W™

Enjoy it to the hilt—at home!



The castle is dark. The drafts from the open turret behind you are cold. Seated at your computer, you have entered another time. When unlikely heroes fought for the survival of all that was good. When magic was real.

You have joined the battle, not as a bystander, but as a *participant*. And you have 7 adventures to conquer. Ever fought with a sword? Been lost in a labyrinthine dungeon? Or cast a spell?

Digitalized illustrations from Lucasfilm's masterwork, plus high resolution graphics make this game a heart-stopper. Just a joystick, a mouse or a few keystrokes is all you need to play.

Will you defeat the evil queen? Depends. How strong is your spirit? How pure is your heart? How powerful is your magic?

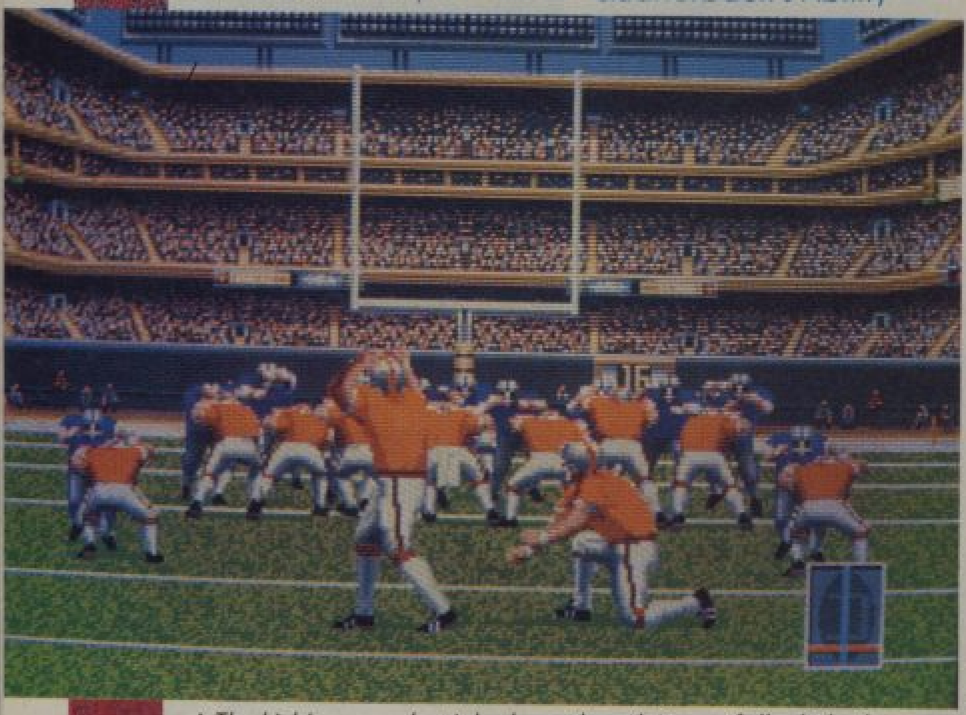
M I N D S C A P E

Reviews

TV SPORT

► MACHINES: AMIGA/ATARI ST/IBM PC/C64.
► SUPPLIER: CINEMAWARE/MIRRORSOFT.
► PRICE: AMIGA £29.99, ST £24.99, C64 £14.99 (DISK ONLY), IBM PC £29.99.
► VERSION TESTED: AMIGA.
► REVIEWER: CIARAN BRENNAN.

What's this? A sports simulation from Cinemaware! I thought that those boys were only interested in producing 'interactive movies'. Well strangely enough, that's exactly what this is in some



▲ *The kick's away, but it looks as though it may fall a little short.*

respects, for although American Football is an action-packed outdoor pursuit, the modern game is greatly dependent on television coverage for most of its atmosphere and, importantly, revenue.

Cinemaware claims that its first products were merely test runs, and that future games are going to be even more spectacular. If the company lives up to this claim, then computer gaming is in for a few major changes: *Sinbad* was good, *Rocket Ranger* was wonderful – but *TV Sports Football* is something else again. It combines a classy real-time game simulation with entertaining and informative 'TV coverage', total team customisation and a full 28-player league option!

When each player has chosen a team, a full squad is displayed on the coach's clipboard and 'Talent' points are distributed between the players. Each player's points are sorted into four categories: Speed, Strength, Hands and Ability. These categories affect different skills, depending on the player's position: for instancde the Quarterback's Ability rating determines his pass accuracy, while the same section controls a Fullback's speed of changing direction. The squad's names can also be customised to include anyone you fancy really (how about trying your granny as a Quarterback?).

Once the team's knocked into shape, it's off to the astrodome for the opening game of the season . . .

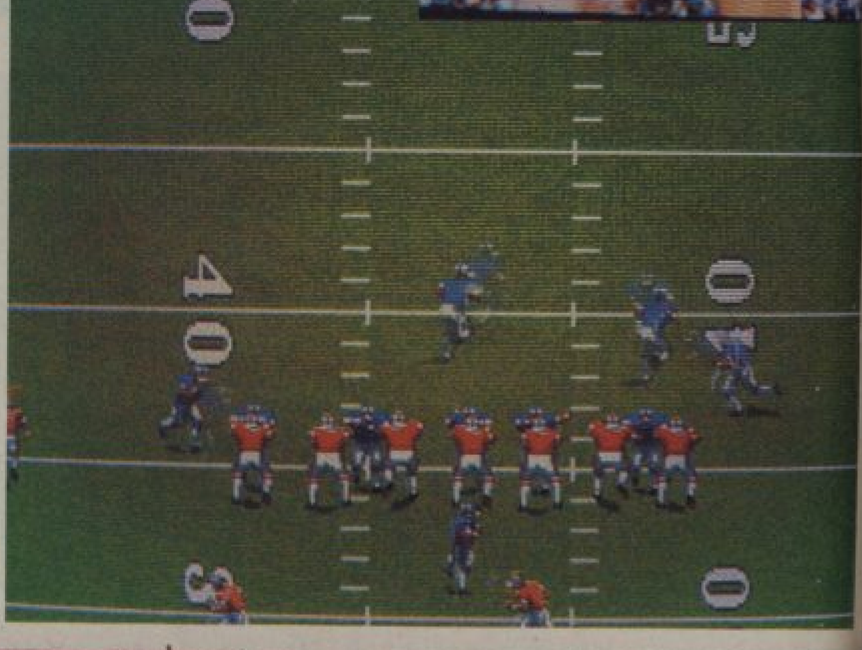
The show starts with an introduction from a desk-bound smoothie and an eye-popping display from a troupe of pumped-up cheerleaders. After this a quick coin toss determines which side kicks off and the players take to the field for the first down.

There are three modes of play: one-player against the computer, two players against one another and two players against the computer. The first two categories are self explanatory, but the third is both unusual and interesting. When two players take on the computer, both play at all times but one controls the offence and the other looks after the defence.



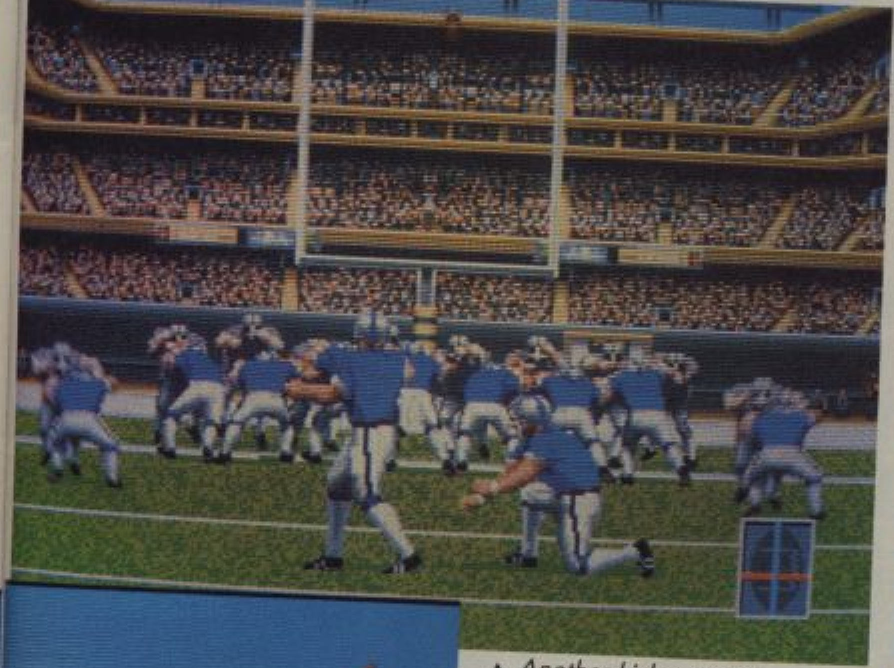
▲ *The lighter side . . .*





▼ *Dallas are in trouble.*

TS FOOTBALL



▲ *Another kick attempt.*



▼*Chicago rushes in for a touchdown.*



the computer can be left to its own devices and happily plays both sides until the player once again decides to take control.

The realism which is sustained throughout extends right down to such seemingly minor details as punt and place kicking. In fact, the place kicking sequence is one of the most impressive visual scenes in the program, employing huge realistic characters that move smoothly and respond accurately – like everything else, the result of a place kick is entirely dependent on the player's skill.

When play begins, a single highlighted player comes under joystick control. In defensive mode, the Quarterback is controlled until he releases the ball, whereupon the closest receiver takes over. The rest of the team's general movement pattern is pre-determined by whatever 'play' is selected, but each player responds quickly to the opposition's movements by blocking, tackling and moving into position as required.

Occasionally a player gets into a tight scrape and may be at a loss for which play to employ. In this case

TVSF is the most entertaining, accurate and engrossing sports simulation I've ever experienced. If Cinemaware keeps on improving at this rate, I daren't imagine what it's next release, *Lords of the Rising Sun*, will turn out like.

AMIGA

► GRAPHICS	93%
► SOUND	90%
► VALUE	87%
► PLAYABILITY	89%
► **OVERALL**	**93%**



▲ *Cinemaware in-jokes include a few appearances from previous game characters. Anyone spotted Rocket Ranger?*

TV Sports Football is a staggering accomplishment, even considering the Amiga's capabilities. The game itself would be enough, but when you add the little finishing touches such as the referee and the constant supply of on-screen match information and player statistics you end up with one of the most realistic and complete packages ever.

It may be my bias as a keen American football fan taking over here, but

C+VG HIT!

UPDATE . . .

The Amiga and PC versions are set to hit the streets in time for this season's Superbowl. However, because the other versions won't be finished in time to meet this date, C64 and ST owners will fall foul of the unusual American football season, as their versions aren't due for release until the beginning of the new season – next Autumn! Crumbs!

The CRUCIAL COMPILATION

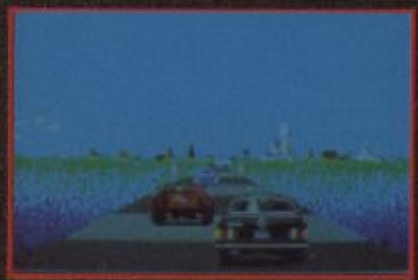




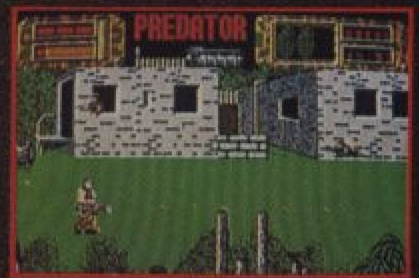
GRYZOR Featuring all the game-play of the arcade original, Gryzor takes you into a thrilling alien world of force fields, fanatical guerillas and strange enemy defence systems – but you have the fire-power and maybe, with a "little" skill, grit and split second timing, you can infiltrate the aliens' headquarters. Play Gryzor once and you'll be hooked!
© 1987 Konami



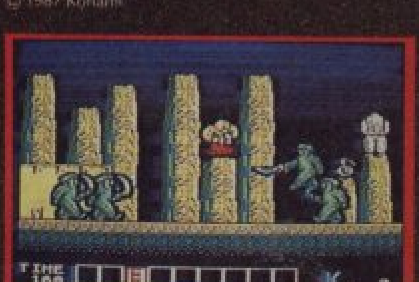
BARBARIAN THE STORY SO FAR... The evil sorcerer Drax has agreed that if a champion can be found who is able to defeat his demonic guardians, the Princess Mariana will be released. From the wastelands comes an unknown barbarian, a mighty warrior, wielding his broadsword with deadly skill. Can he vanquish the forces of Darkness? ONLY YOU CAN SAY...
© Palace Software Ltd...



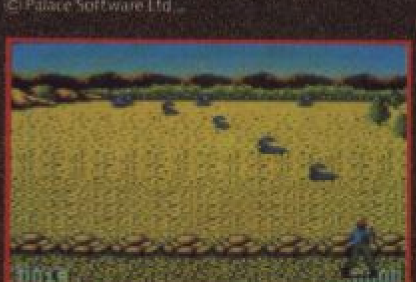
CRAZY CARS You are racing in the world's craziest race: "The American Cross Country Prestige Cars Race". If you are able to complete the race before the time runs out, you will get a faster car. You start with a Mercedes 560 SEC, and only the world's best drivers may drive a Ferrari GTO.
PREPARE TO START, READY? GO!!!
© Titus Software Ltd.
LAST NINJA replaces C.CARS on C64



PREDATOR You've heard about Predator, the Schwarzenegger movie – now you can play the leading role. Take a crack commando unit into the South American jungle to rescue a bunch of trapped diplomats. Should be easy enough...and so it would be, if it weren't for the mysterious alien who keeps on taking out your men.
© 1987 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp. All rights reserved.



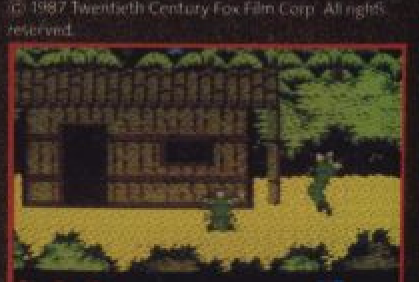
KARNOV Join Karnov, the fire-breathing Russian stongman, on his hazardous quest to defeat the evil dragon Ryu and find the Lost Treasure of Babylon. Karnov is a vast 4-way scrolling game that combines both strategy and fast action in nine challenging levels of gameplay. It is recognised by arcade addicts everywhere as one of the best games of its kind. Karnov also has something special in the way of characters – have you ever been killed by a skeleton on an Ostrich?
© Electric Dreams Software Ltd.



COMBAT SCHOOL Konami's arcade hit now for your home micro and already a No. 1 hit. Seven gruelling events featuring the Assault Course, Firing Range, Arm Wrestling and Combat with the instructor himself! Combat school throws down the challenge to the toughest of thoroughbred gamesters.
© 1987 Konami.



TARGET RENEGADE Every move you make, every step you take, they're watching you. Fight your way through the precinct – the back alleys, the car parks, fight your way through the villainous community, the skin-heads, the Beastie Boys, the bouncers. This is just the tip of the iceberg on you chilling quest to confront "MR. BIG".



PLATOON Lead your Platoon deep into enemy territory, you can almost feel the humidity, sense the threatening dangers as you encounter the enemy and his many booby traps. Having found the underground maze of tunnels, enter at your peril! Enemy soldiers lunge at you from the murky waters within, but this is the only way you can find vital information. If you come out of this alive, you'll be just one of the few!
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AMSTRAD
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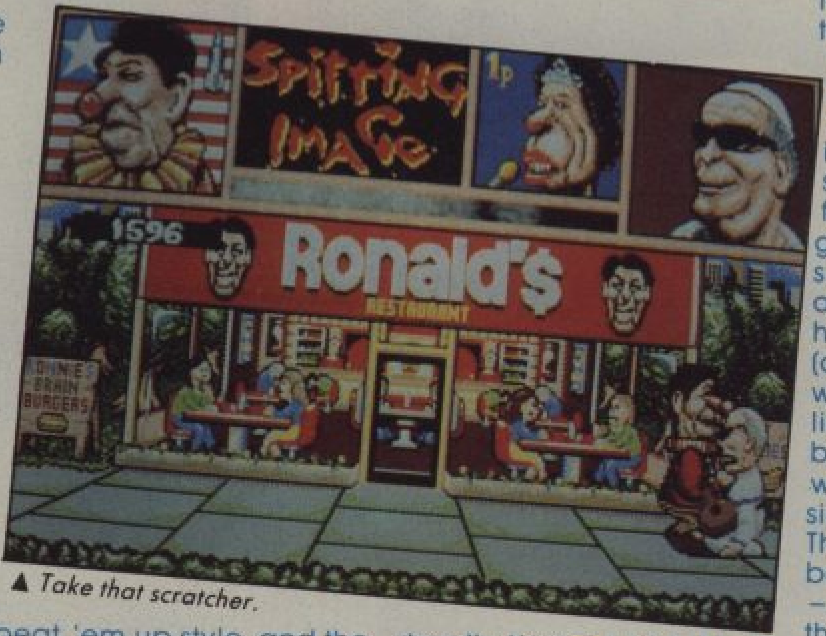
Reviews

SPITTING IMAGE

► PRICE: C64, SPECTRUM, AMSTRAD, CASSETTE £9.95, AMSTRAD, DISK £14.95, C64 DISK £12.95. ST AND AMIGA £19.95.

According to the prophecies of Spitting Image, there will be an apocalyptic war within the next seven years. And from the ashes of the world will rise one leader who will reign supreme.

At the start of a game, charicatures of six leaders are displayed – Gorbachev, Thatcher, the Pope, Ronald Reagan, the Ayatollah and President Botha – one of which the player chooses to be. Next comes an even bigger choice – who to fight. Yes – fight! In this wild and wacky Spitting Image world the leaders battle for the number one position by means of a one-on-one punch-up!



▲ *Take that scratcher.*

This summit skirmish takes place over a suitable backdrop – if Thatcher is the opponent, number ten is in evidence behind the pugilists, while a rest home for Ayatollahs is the setting for the punch-up with . . . well, I'm sure you can guess.

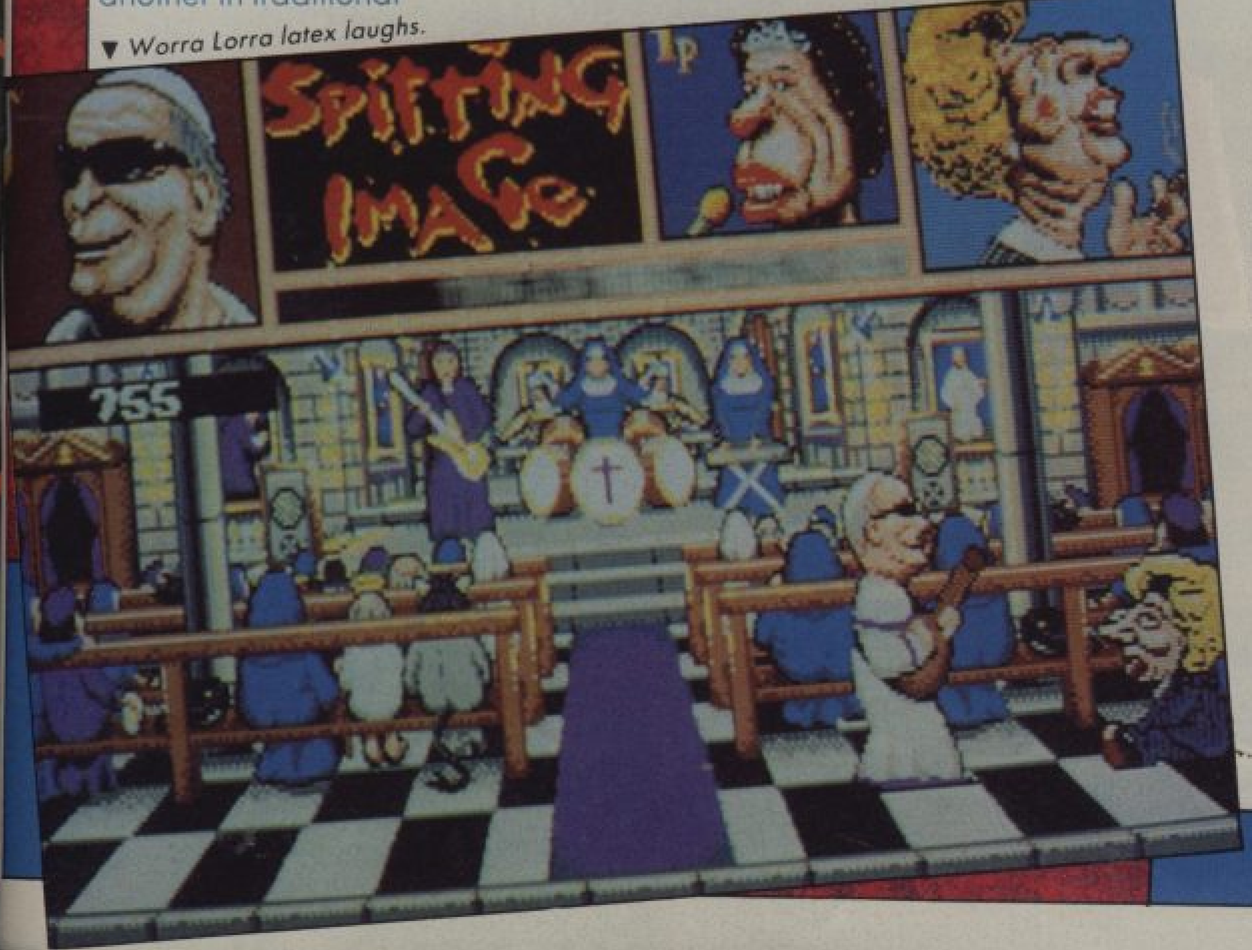
The fighters face one another in traditional beat 'em up style, and the objective is simply to defeat the opponent three times in five rounds. Both combatants are capable of head, body and feet hits, and also have a special move – Botha, for example, drops his pants and urinates on his opponent, while Gorbachev does a deadly Kossack kick. Each successful hit knocks a chunk off the fighter's energy bar, and if it drops to zero the bout is lost.

If the player wins, the title screen returns minus the defeated character, and another one is chosen. This continues until all leaders are defeated, whereupon the player is shown an end sequence pertaining to that character, or the player loses a bout, which results in the termination of the game.

Much as I enjoyed playing *Spitting Image*, I was left with the distinct impression that there simply isn't enough game for your money. The graphics are utterly superb, with excellent animation and some hilarious touches (although I did stop and wonder what they'll look like on the 8-bit machines), but at the end of the day what you've got is a *very* simple beat 'em up. That bugbear of many beat 'em ups is in evidence – the one-move trick; in this case you just manoeuvre the opponent into the corner and let rip with a series of head punches to beat him with ease.

It's a shame there isn't just a little more in it, because the brilliant humour and many neat touches are wasted on the very weak gameplay.

▼ *Worra Lorra latex laughs.*

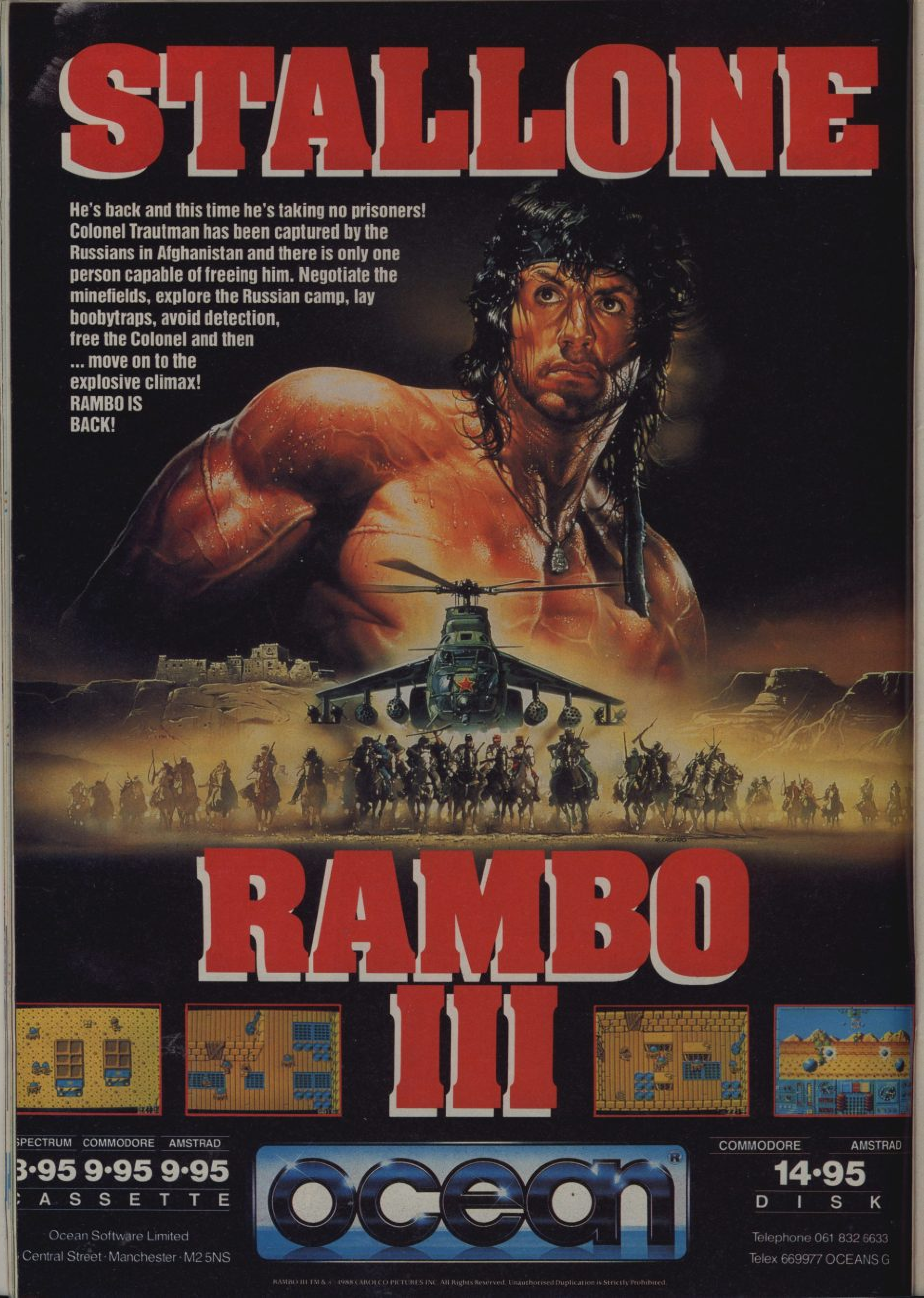


ST

► GRAPHICS	84%
► SOUND	61%
► VALUE	31%
► PLAYABILITY	53%
► **OVERALL**	**56%**

UPDATE . . .

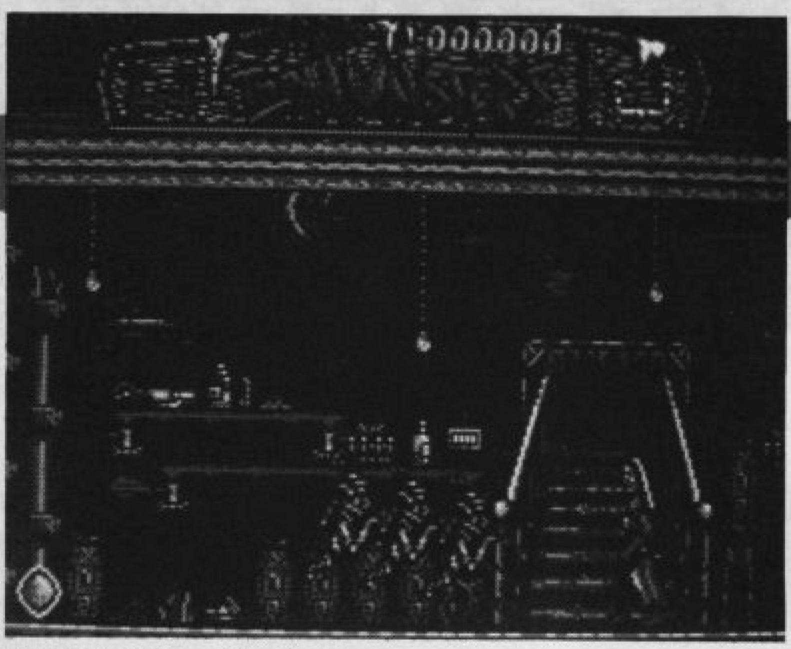
Apart from the usual graphical and sonic differences, Spitting Image will be the same on all formats. The 8-bit versions will be multiload, which obviously will impair enjoyment a little, but other than that the criticisms levelled at the ST version should be relevant for all machines – so try before you buy.



STALLONE
He's back and this time he's taking no prisoners! Colonel Trautman has been captured by the Russians in Afghanistan and there is only one person capable of freeing him. Negotiate the minefields, explore the Russian camp, lay boobytraps, avoid detection, free the Colonel and then ... move on to the explosive climax! RAMBO IS BACK!
RAMBO III
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RAMBO III TM & © 1988 CAROLCO PICTURES INC. All Rights Reserved. Unauthorised Duplication is Strictly Prohibited.

► **MACHINES: ST/AMIGA/SPEC/C64/AMS/MS-X.**
► **SUPPLIER: AGAIN AGAIN.**
► **PRICE: ST/AMIGA £19.99, SPEC/C64/AMS/MSX £9.99 CASS.**
► **VERSIONS TESTED: ST/SPECTRUM.**
► **REVIEWER: PAUL GLANCEY.**

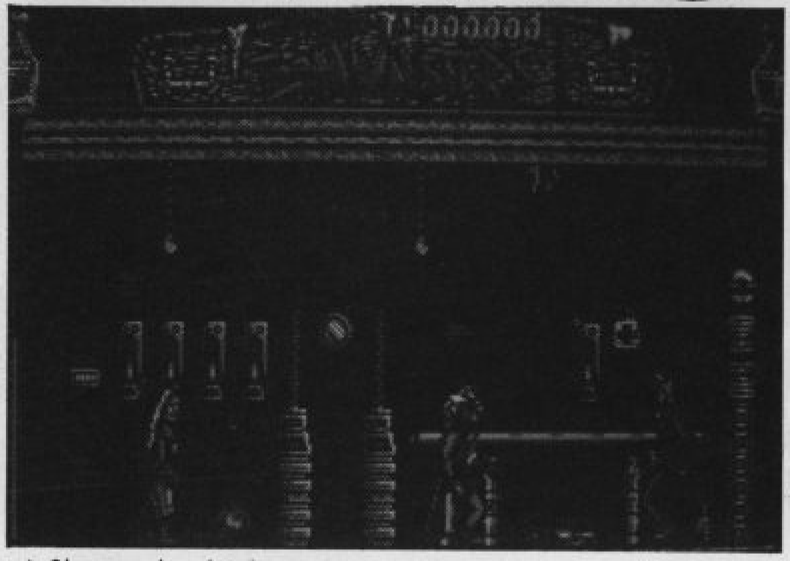
THE MUNSTERS



▲ *Loads of marauding ghosts.*

The antics of the wierdest sit-com family this side of the Brady Bunch form the basis of this debut game for Again Again, the full-price label of Alternative Software. And what an unauspicious debut it's turned out to be. Allow me to elaborate.

Marilyn, the only member of the family who could be described as human, has been kidnapped by "Old Nick", and being the kindly family they are, the Munsters rally round to save her. Lilly Munster has to roam the Munster mansion, blasting the massed ranks of Old Nick's ghoulie army with magic fireballs. Certain nasties are stronger than others, and to deal with them Lilly has to destroy lower-ranking ghosts to build up her spell power, providing her with more potent fireballs to fling. Hidden throughout the play area are mystery objects which allegedly help take care of the ghosts, but none of the items I picked up seemed to improve Lilly's chances.



▲ *Shoot at the ghoulies.*

The real pain in the bot (with both versions tested) is that you can spend ages just blasting ghosts to build up your spell power (which is a pretty boring task), then unexpectedly run into an indestructible ghost and lose all of your energy in microsends. And because you only get one life, that's the end of the game! Consequently, you don't get the chance to do any serious exploring or puzzle solving so there's no feeling of progress, only bags of frustration.

The graphics on both versions are average, but the detail on the backgrounds does tend to confuse the action in the foreground. At least they successfully recreate the look of the series, which counts for something.

▼ *Not a very good tie-in.*



The use of sound in both versions is pretty limited, adding norr a lot to the atmosphere at all. The programmers of the ST version have provided it with some mediocre spot effects and a rendition of the TV theme tune which is quite jolly first time round, but becomes plain annoying after it's been repeated for the umpteenth time.

As you've probably guessed, I wasn't all that keen on *The Munsters.* The standard of programming almost reaches average, but there seems to have been very little thought put into the game design. I would baulk at spending ten quid on the Spectrum version, but would faint at shelling out twenty of my favourite coins for an ST version which is little better. Not a game I would recommend, even to Munsters fans.

ST	
► GRAPHICS	67%
► SOUND	44%
► PLAYABILITY	28%
► VALUE	21%
► **OVERALL**	**27%**

SPECTRUM	
► GRAPHICS	46%
► SOUND	43%
► PLAYABILITY	26%
► VALUE	29%
► **OVERALL**	**30%**

UPDATE . . .

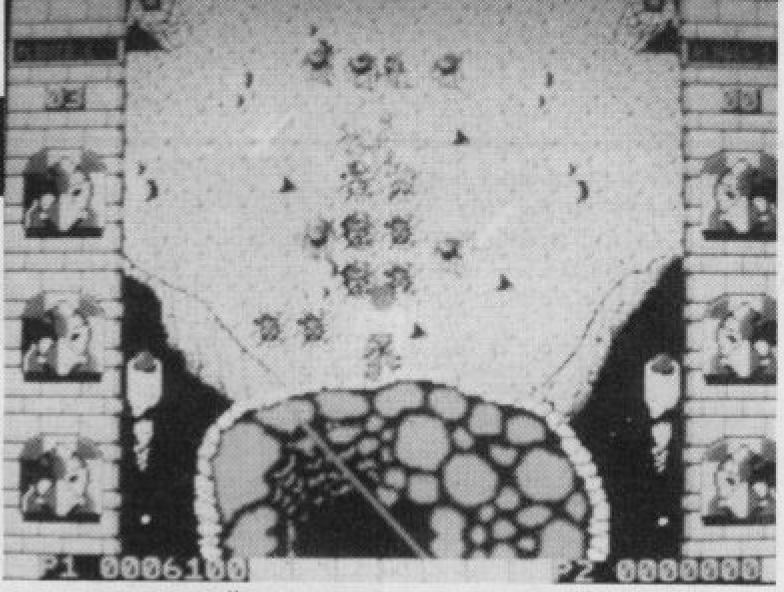
All versions, unfortunately, have the same game design. So, although graphics and sound might be different, you'll still find the game annoying whether you own an MSX, C64 or whatever.



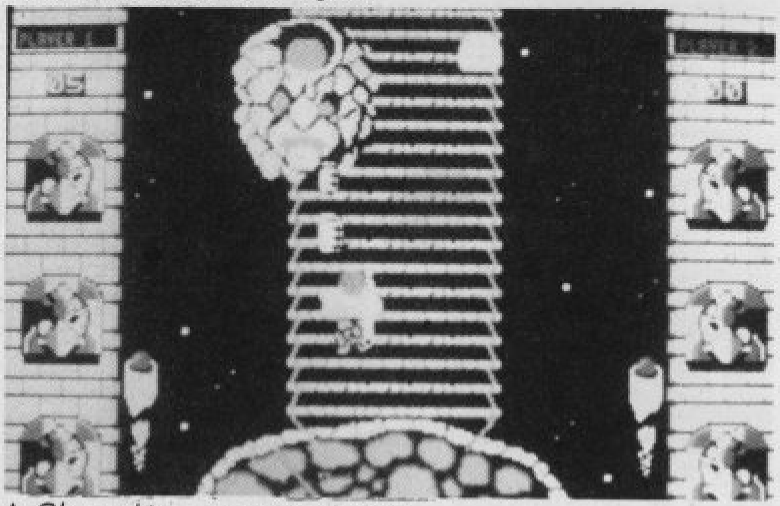
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VICTORY ROAD

► **MACHINES: SPEC/C64/AMS.**
► **SUPPLIER: IMAGINE.**
► **PRICE: SPEC £7.95 CASS, C64/AMS £8.95 CASS, C64 £12.95, DISK AMS £14.95 DISK.**
► **VERSION TESTED: AMSTRAD.**
► **REVIEWER: PAUL GLANCEY.**



▲ *Ikari Warriors all over again.*



▲ *Ok graphics – no prizes though.*

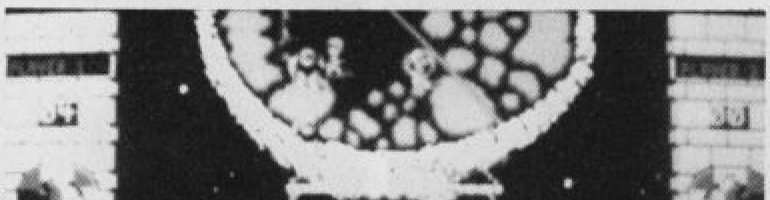
One thing war has always been good for is the computer games industry. While you were wasting those ruthless little terrorists in *Ikari Warriors*, did you spare a thought for their poor grey-haired mothers, sitting at home, waiting for their next letter from their boys at the front? You did? What a sentimental dope – they're only sprites for goodness sake.

Humanitarians need have no such worries in this, the sequel to *Ikari Warriors*, because this time the intrepid pair (that's you and a friend if you have one) are taking out honest-to-goodness monsters – three heads, blood sucking – the whole bit. The beasts hang out on the road of the title, and it's your pleasure to yomp your way up it, clearing it of nasties with your trusty machine gun and a sack of grenades.

You can also put your weapons to good use in a bit of urban demolition. Pillars and temples block the road, some of which harbour handy weapon upgrades – flame throwers, smart bombs, extra grenades and a monster paralysing goodie. Also on the landscape are trapdoors which can transport you to the lairs of bonus point fatties which split mini-monsters down the screen. Blast it and it's back on the road for more vertically-scrolling shoot 'em up larks.

Control is via the standard eight-direction joysticking, but the thoughtful programmers have put in a toggle key, so that you can make your bloke keep his weapon pointed in the same direction until you de-toggle. This is handy when dealing death to fatties which always remain above you on screen. Alternatively, there are facilities for using the Cheetah 125+ stick (the one with the previously useless rotational control). Novelties such as this lift *Victory Road* above the standard Ikari Warriors clone, but it still doesn't beat the original. Sound is this version's real downfall, consisting of a few feeble coughs and tweets which hardly convey the feeling of the battlefield. The tidy and colourful graphics help compensate for this though.

However, as I said, it doesn't offer anything over the Elite conversions of Ikari Warriors, and how long have you had that in your software collection?



▲ *Blast that nasty.*

AMSTRAD	
► GRAPHICS	77%
► SOUND	23%
► PLAYABILITY	75%
► VALUE	68%
► **OVERALL**	**71%**

UPDATE . . .

The quality of other games in this vein suggest that this is a format which transfers well to almost any machine. The other 8-bit versions should bear all the features which made the Amstrad one so worthwhile, and the audio improvements possible on the C64 should make that the best of the bunch. No 16-bit versions are planned at present.

Reviews

BAAL

► MACHINES: ST/AMIGA/C64.
► SUPPLIER: PSYCLAPSE.
► PRICE: ST/AMIGA £19.95, C64
£9.99 CASS, £12.99 DISK.
► VERSION TESTED: ST.
► JULIAN RIGNALL.

Traditional trudge, shoot 'n' explore-type arcade adventures are pretty scarce on the ST. *Barbarian* is alright, but it's icon-driven and becomes rather tedious after a while. Baal is presented in similar fashion – it's a side-on platform arcade adventure – but the player has direct control over the on-screen hero, rather than having to use icons to guide him around.

The player takes control of a Time Warrior who is about to embark on a top secret mission – to enter the lair of the evil and opressive Baal and destroy him to save the Earth. This might sound pretty rum stuff, but Baal's lair is huge, and danger lurks around every corner.

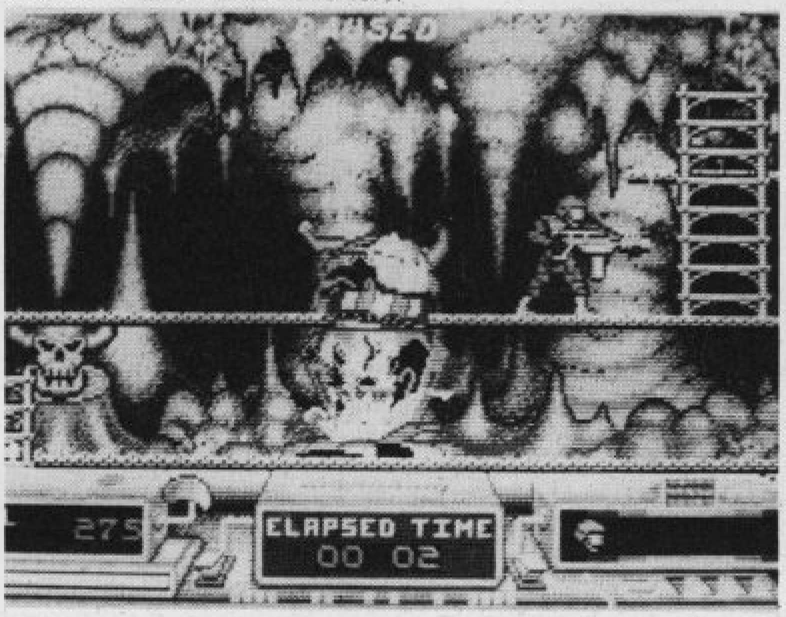
The mission starts with the Time Warrior armed only with his wits and a large laser rifle. Information is sadly lacking, so it's up to the player to take his own initiative.

The Warrior can walk left and right over the landscape, with the screen scrolling as he moves, and he can also climb and ascend ladders if he finds one.

It doesn't take long for Baal's minions to realise that they've got a visitor, and they attack with fevour. If an enemy hits the Warrior, a chunk is knocked off his energy bar, and it drops towards a fatal zero. There are five Warriors given to the player to complete the quest.

The Warrior's laser comes in pretty handy against Baal's hench-beings, and a couple of well-aimed

▼ *Baal – 16-bit arcade adventure.*





SERVE AND VOLLEY

► MACHINES: C64.
► SUPPLIER: ACCOLADE.
► PRICE: C64 £9.95 CASS, C64 £14.95 DISK, IBM £24.95.
► VERSION TESTED: C64.
► REVIEWER: EUGENE LACEY.

You have to admire Accolade's nerve for having a crack at producing a tennis game. It is such a well worn theme in computer gaming – on the ageing Commodore 64 in particular – that you have to believe you are bringing a fresh interpretation of the sport to the computer screen in order to tackle the project in the first place.

Accolade obviously believe they are bringing something new to the genre and I have to say I am inclined to agree.

The game features a unique power of shot implimentation method that at first seemws totally weird – but is, in practice, a novel way of making tennis on computer more than a moronic digitised game of ping pong between you and the machine.

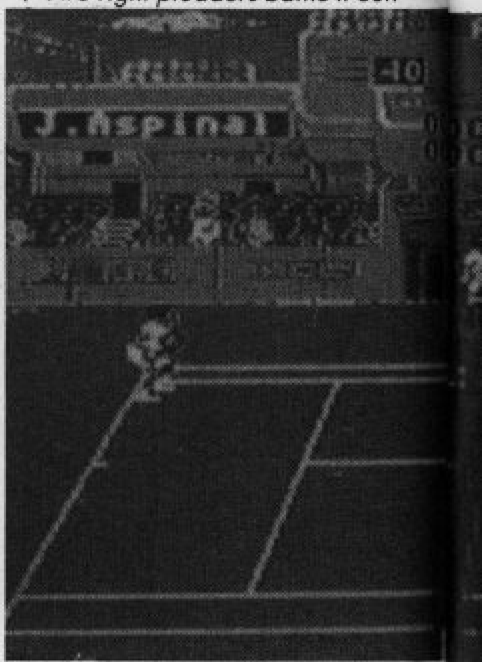
How so? By the use of a window which appears in the top corner of the screen. This features a rising barometer indicating the amount of power you wish to put behind your shot. Press fire button on your joystick when you are happy with the level of power indicated by the barometer.

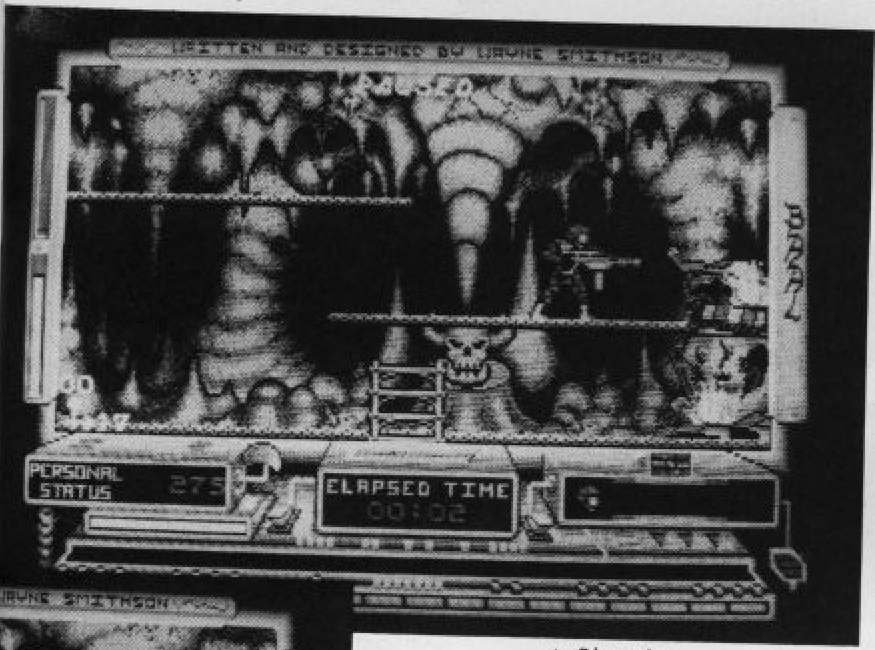
The window also features a graduated racket which shows the players' racket and forearm moving through the swing. This is used for serving as well as

▼ *Serve and Volley – options galore.*

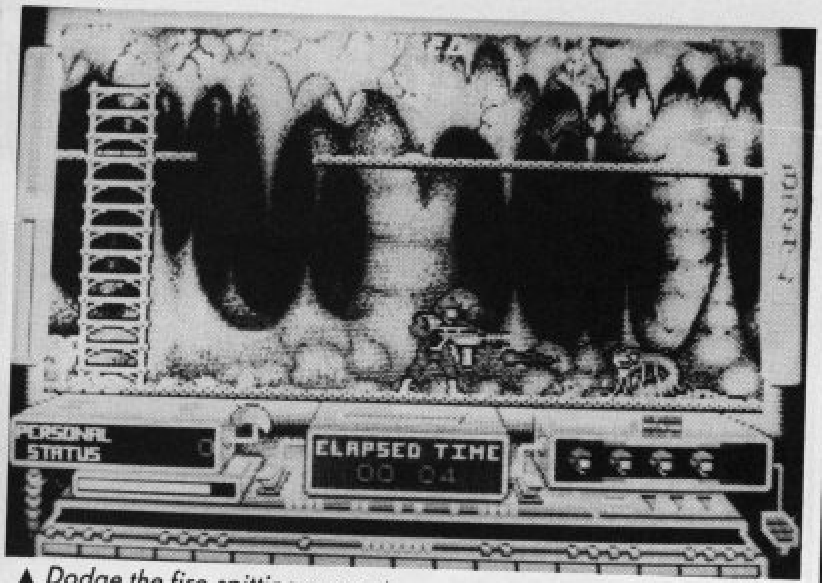


▼ *Two right plodders battle it out.*

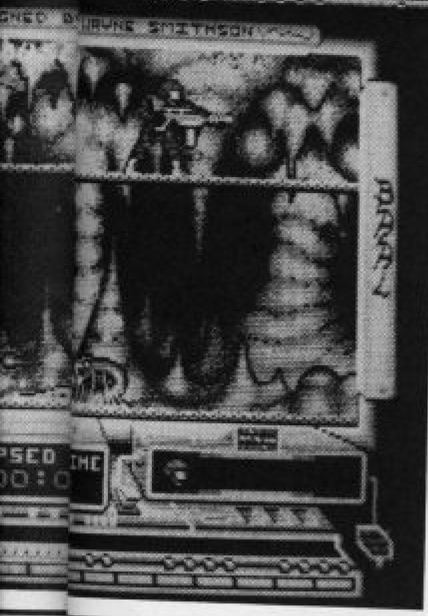




▲ *Blast the generators.*



▲ *Dodge the fire-spitting serpent.*



◀ *Baal – its a winner.*

volleys are all that's required to get them pushing up daisies.

Force fields are frequently encountered, and the only way to get past them is tracking down and destroying the generator that powers the particular force field. It's this that gives the adventure a puzzle element, as you have to work out which generator to take out next.

The game is thoroughly engrossing, and there s a very large map and there are plenty of surprises – the load/save option is a godsend! Presentation is excellent, and then whole thing looks and sounds great – the 11 minute sampled title tune is one of the best pieces of music I've heard on the ST.

So, if you're after an addictive and action-packed exploration game, buy Baal.

ST

- ► GRAPHICS 78%
- ► SOUND 91%
- ► VALUE 72%
- ► PLAYABILITY 82%
- ► **OVERALL 80%**

UPDATE . . .

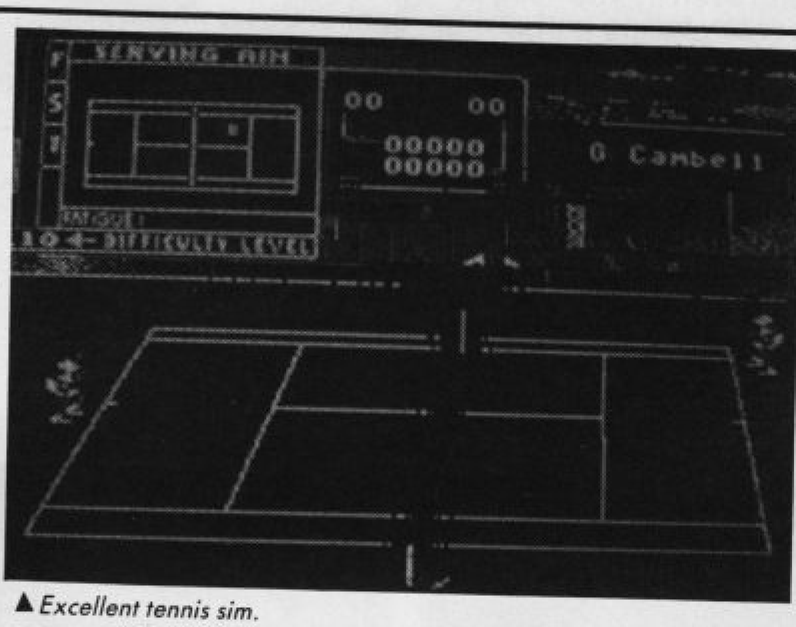
Amiga and C64 versions are coming soon; the Amiga will look and sound better than the ST, while the C64 incarnation will lose out graphically. The gameplay will be the same, though.

making ordinary shots.

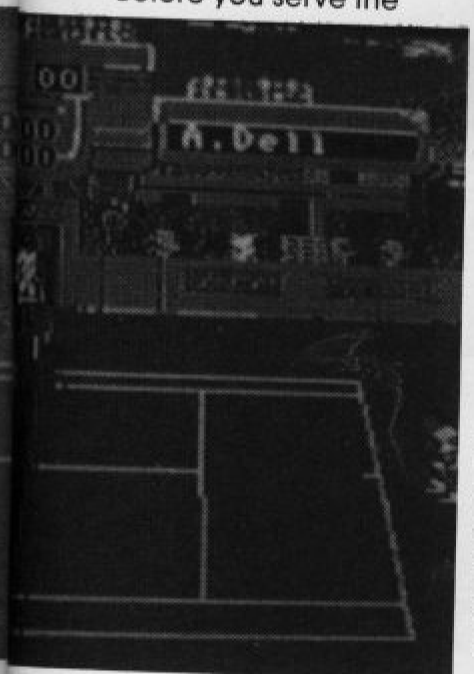
It sounds a little complicated and takes a while to master, but it is all made easy by a series of on-screen instructions and training modes.

Serving is very well thought out and again has the feel of a real sports simulation rather than merely a pong-style tennis game.

Before you serve the



▲ *Excellent tennis sim.*



game offers you a map of the court on which you pick the spot where you want to hit the ball. Then using the power barometer you let fly.

The animation of the moving ball is excellent – in a sort of pseudo 3D. It moves a little slowly and is perhaps is a little small and therefore difficult to see but it is never the less convincing because of the trajectory of the ball.

Another feature that marks *Serve and Volley* down as a quality game is the range and number of options available.

Amongst the dozens of options open to you are the choice of venue. You can play in the centre court with thousands of fans looking on, or a much more relaxed game at the Country Club with its private poolside practice court, or even more layed back than this at the beach. The background graphics are as good as the general standard of animation.

You can even choose your own players, and if you don't want to choose any of the players listed you can also create your own. As I said Accolade have thought of everything.

I thoroughly enjoyed *Serve and Volley*. If you are in the market for a tennis game for your computer look no further.

C64

- ► GRAPHICS 84%
- ► SOUND 75%
- ► VALUE 70%
- ► PLAYABILITY 85%
- ► **OVERALL 76%**

UPDATE . . .

C64 and IBM versions are available now. There are no current plans to convert Serve and Volley to the 16 bit machines. Great shame this, as there isn't a decent tennis game around for either the ST or Amiga.

Reviews

FOUR SOCCER SIMULATORS

► MACHINES: C64, SPECTRUM, AMSTRAD CPC.
► SUPPLIER: CODE MASTERS.
► PRICE: ALL VERSIONS £9.95 CASS.
► VERSION TESTED: SPEC.
► REVIEWER: TONY DILLON.



Footballing fun and frolicks.

Code Master's first full-price game looks like four completely different games in one package with a linking theme – football – rather in the style of a compilation. In fact, what you get are three games that are exactly the same apart from a few minor differences, and a training section, which does prove to be marginally useful.

On the first side of the first of the two tapes in the packaging is the training. This incorporates a split-screen view of a gymnasium. To train your player you move the joystick in a way not unlike the Epyx sims to get your on-screen persona to do things. Move the joystick in the shape of an arch to get him to jump over a bar, pull down and then up to get him to do press ups, etc. After you've gone though the routine joystick wagglers, you do some real training, and are given the chance to participate in all manner of events to improve your skills in the other three games. You can practice dribbling and passing, and even try your luck at penalty taking and saving.

It would be pointless for me to describe the other three games separately, simply because they all look and play exactly the same. The only differences are the back drops and the amount of players on screen. In street soccer and Five-A-Side you have a quintet of players, while in full match, you get the full complement of 11-a-side.

As I've already said, the backdrops are different too. In street soccer, you play in a street, bouncing the ball off cars, houses etc, and 5-a-side has you playing inside a walled centre. Guess where you play the full match.

The graphics aren't bad at all. The players move quite realistically, and the backdrops are detailed, but the ball moves terribly and the screen flip-scrolls. Wouldn't it have been nicer to do smooth scrolling lads?

The controls are appalling. Fire both shoots and changes player when you don't want it, and doesn't when you do. Just getting your man to run in the direction you want to is an effort. The response is far too sluggish for a fast action football game, so in a way it's a good thing it's not fast action.

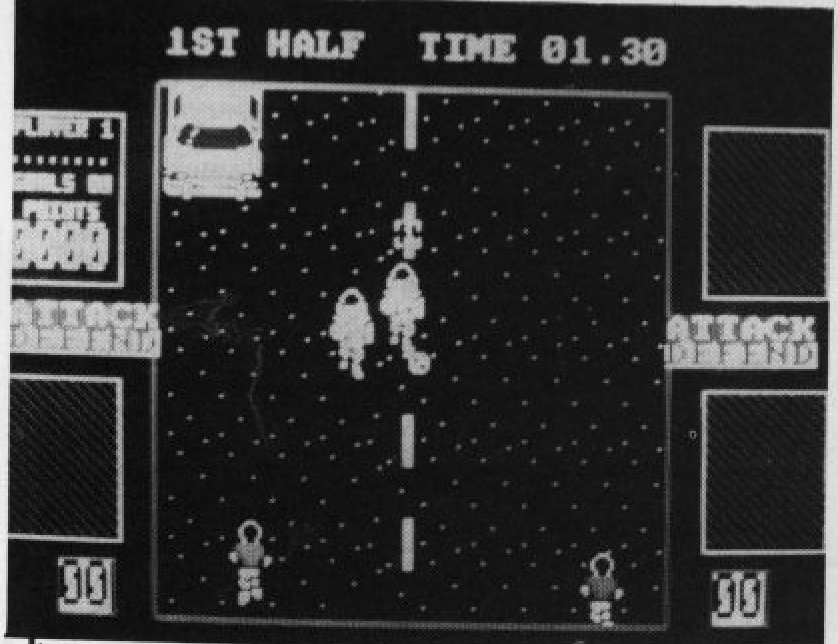
That's what ruins the game, the speed. It plays at an incredibly slow rate, which makes it unplayable. 4-Soccer Simulators is basically a package of four sub-standard games. If you want a good football game go and get Microsoccer or Emlyn Hughes Soccer.

► GRAPHICS	68%
► SOUND	43%
► VALUE	28%
► PLAYABILITY	36%
► **OVERALL**	**44%**

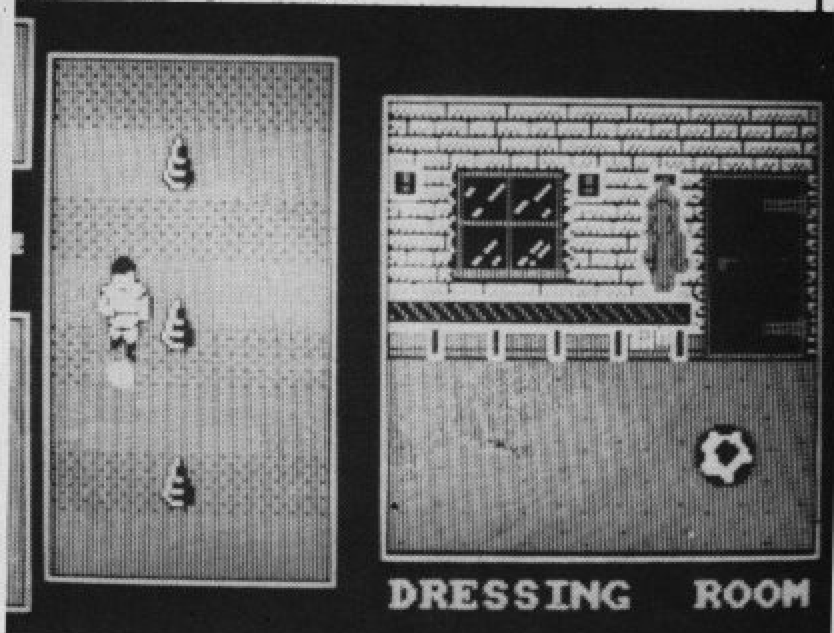
UPDATE . . .

Barring the usual graphics and sound differences, all versions are basically the same. Hopefully the Amstrad and C64 versions will be faster.

▼ *A right Arsenal of a game.*



▼ *Digital sphere – kicking japes.*




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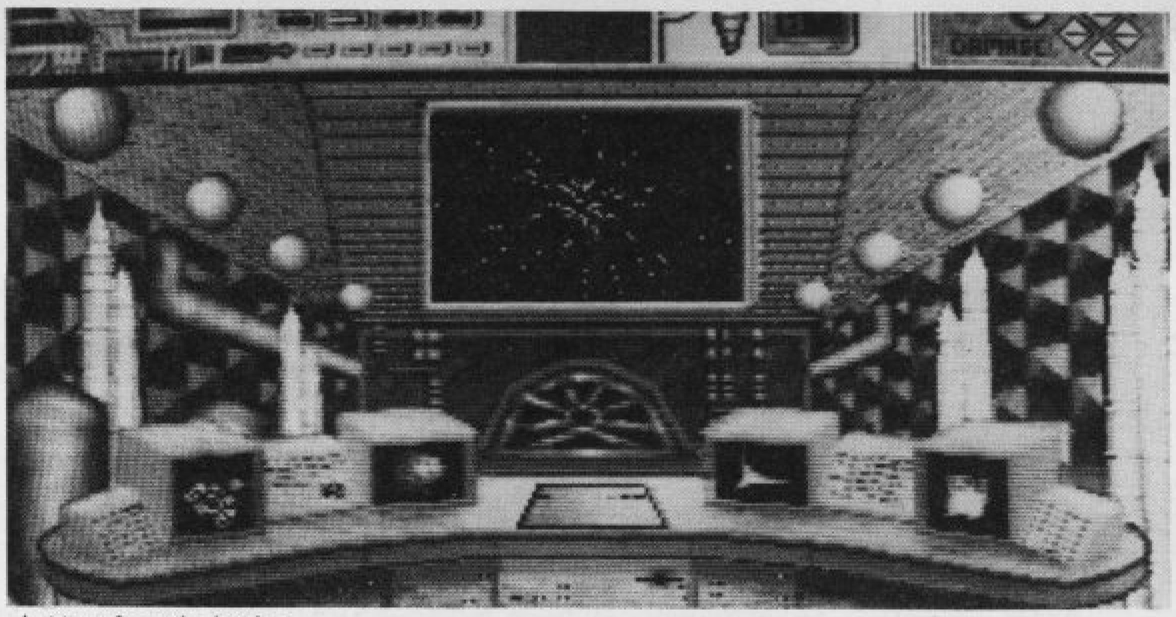
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▲ *View from the bridge.*

PIONEER PLAGUE

- ► **MACHINES: AMIGA.**
- ► **SUPPLIER: MANDARIN.**
- ► **PRICE: £24.95.**
- ► **VERSION TESTED: AMIGA.**
- ► **REVIEWER: TONY DILLON.**

Pioneer Plague boasts itself as the world's first home computer game with more than 4,000 colours on screen at once. A lot of Amiga owners are going to see that and buy the game just on that one strength. There are two things I should point out here. The first is that the Amiga can't actually do much in HAM mode. It can display a picture (with a small amount of flicker) which may well be pretty, but it doesn't really add up to much of a game. The second point is that nice graphics do not make for entertainment. Remember Captain Blood? Very attractive, very big, but very boring with over 30,000 planets, only two of them inhabited.

Pioneer Plague sets out to be something it isn't right from the start. The player is the pilot of a probe, and has to try and stop a strange plague from spreading throughout the galaxy.

This basically involves moving a pointer around a lot, looking at some pretty amazing screens, listening to a pretty groovy soundtrack and generally getting bored to tears.

The mission starts inside your warm cosy spaceship. In front of you are four monitors – clicking on the first monitor takes you to your airship, the second is a navigational system, the third is the drone programmer and the fourth contains the loading and saving commands.



▲ *Good graphics – iffy game play.*

The airship allows you to fly from planet to planet, which is done by flying through wormholes in space. Along the way you get to fight lots and lots of hideous space aliens. *Missile Command*-like by moving a pointer over them and pressing the mouse button. As you might have guessed, you don't actually fly the ship through the wormholes, if you can call them wormholes. They consist of three vectorised bumpy holes, and the screen flicks between the three to give an impression of forward movement. It doesn't work.

Drone programming is a curious concept. You 'teach' the drones you have on board attack patterns and then you let them loose on the planet below.

The training manual is probably the most exciting thing about the game. Reading through it you learn of all the exciting things to be found, like Star Shark Fighters, Sub-Euclidian Space, Sky Hatches, but finding them is dull and boring.

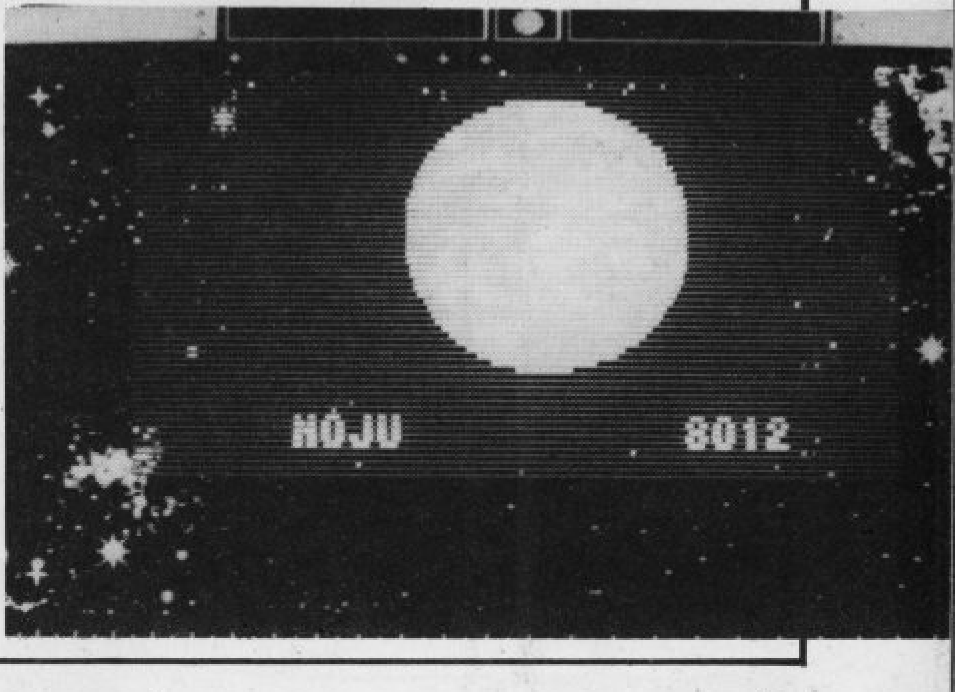
Nice graphics, shame about the game.

AMIGA	
► GRAPHICS	84%
► SOUND	83%
► VALUE	31%
► PLAYABILITY	38%
► **OVERALL**	**39%**

UPDATE . . .

No other versions are planned, but the game is so simple, it would translate to other computers pretty well – although without the graphics there's very little to shout about.

▼ *World turned upside down.*



► SUPPLIER: SILMARILS.
► ST/AMIGA/SPECTRUM/C64/AMSTRAD/PC.
► PRICE: ST £19.95, AMIGA/PC £24.95, C64/SPEC/AMSTRAD £8.95, CASS C64/AMS £14.95 DISK.
► VERSION TESTED: ST.
► REVIEWER: PAUL GLANCEY.



▲ *Bust the evil peddlers.*

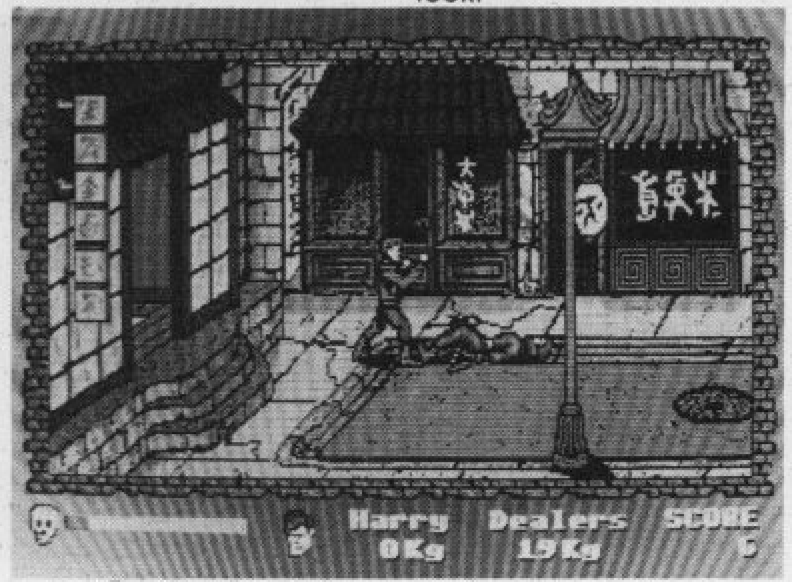
MANHATTAN DEALERS

Joining the gang of urban beat 'em ups is this little number, which boasts "remarkable graphics and animation, plus digitised sounds and stirring music." Well, that bit of spiel from the packaging is best taken with a hefty pinch of salt and a glass of water, but this first release from Silmarils certainly shows potential.

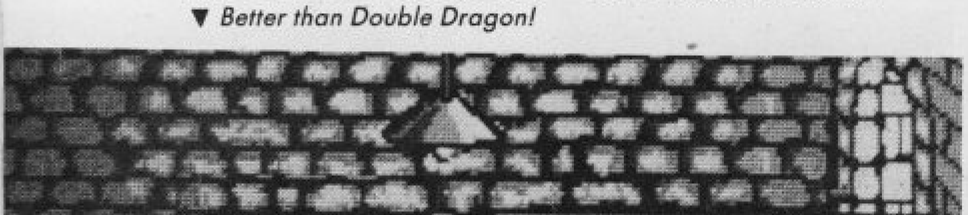
In the game, you take control of Inspector Harry, a vice squad cop with a mission to track down and dispose of every kilogram of dope being peddled on the streets of Manhattan. Each area is displayed in a kind of 3D, so you can walk into and out of the screen – a feature which adds quite a bit to the feel of the game.

The only problem is you can't walk straight up or down the screen for some reason, so you end up doing silly things like walking lamp posts. In between stumbling over fire hydrants, Harry gets his kicks from beating seven shades of sunlight out of drug-pushing hoods. Four types of kick and two punches are at Harry's disposal, but in a clinch you're more likely to keep the bad guys occupied with repeated jabs and high kicks.

When they finally expire, certain hoods leave behind packets of drugs which Harry has to take to a brazier and burn, regaining vital energy in the process.



▲ *Hood-hoofing horseplay.*


▼ *Better than Double Dragon!*

There is quite a variety of opponents, which range from chain-wielding punks through whip-crakcin' women to enraged home-owners who hurl household items in your direction. There're even a couple of Ninja-types in there. Where would we be without 'em?

As this sort of games goes, *Manhattan Dealers* really isn't too bad. In fact, the only weak points are the features which the packaging claims are so great. The animation has its moments, but you only have to shuffle Harry across the screen to see that there could have been more work done there. The digitised sound is pretty pathetic, and the music wouldn't stir a cup of weak tea. The gameplay is very easy to get into though, because it is simplistic, and yet the many different opponents save the game from becoming too boring. I did groan when I started the second level only to find that the graphics were the same as the first, but there are more often than not two baddies beating you up simultaneously on each screen, so you're not going to be left hanging around.

It's not the greatest game of it's type, and at £20 it could hardly be called cheap, but if you're a fan of digitised violence *Manhattan Dealers* is probably worth a quick look.

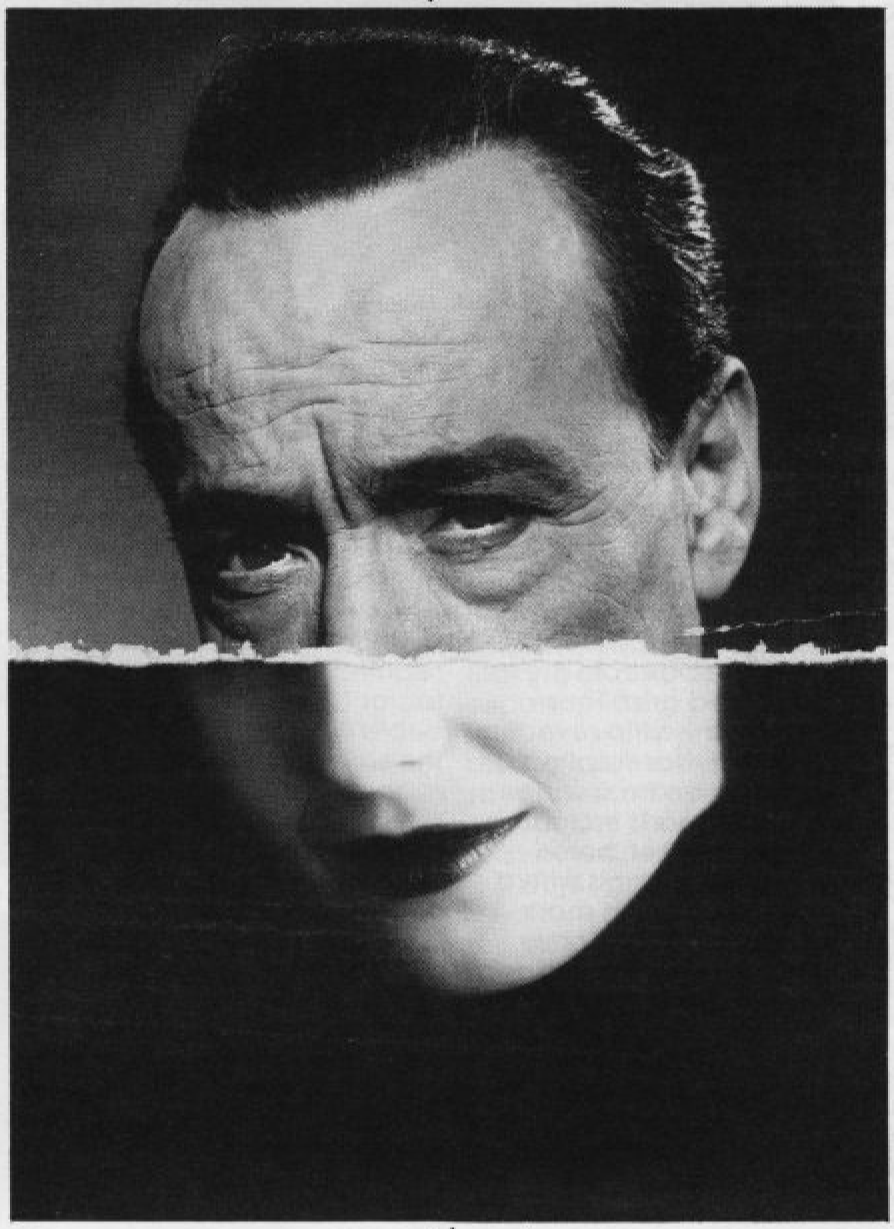
ST

► GRAPHICS	71%
► SOUND	44%
► VALUE	66%
► PLAYABILITY	71%
► **OVERALL**	**68%**

UPDATE . . .

The Amiga and PC versions should be on the shelves as you read this and according to Silmarils they are both very similar to ST *Manhattan.* However, the PC version should feature some extra levels and even some extra trapdoors in the scenery. The 8-bit versions should be on the streets by March or April, no doubt having some graphical and audio differences, but with the basic gameplay unchanged.

From 29 January, you can get half price Young Persons Railcards and half price travel.



I don't half fancy that.

From 29 January until 25 February 16-23 year olds can buy a Young Persons Railcard for half price (that's £7.50 instead of £15). You can also get half price travel when you buy a "Winter Wanderer". This gives 50% off the full Blue Saver or Network AwayBreak Fare. "Winter Wanderers" are not valid on Fridays or on trains arriving in London at or before 1000 Mondays to Thursdays. Isn't it time you did things by halves? Pick up a leaflet at your BR station or Rail Appointed Agents for full details.

Young Persons Railcard.

Reviews

QUESTI OF

► **MACHINES: SPECTRUM/C64/ATARI ST/AMIGA/AMSTRAD.**
► **PRICE: C64, SPECTRUM, AND AMSTRAD £14.99, CASS £19.99 DISK, ATARI ST/AMIGA £19.99.**
► **REVIEWER: EUGENE LACEY.**

"Which Australian lady Tennis Player caused a rumpus at Wimbledon when her knicker elastic snapped?", "Who put seven past Bristol Rover in and which London based snooker player was recently voted BBC sports personality of the year.

You don't know, do you? Well, – I do and I can tell you that the answers will be given to you somewhere in this review – so you are going to have to read it now, ha!

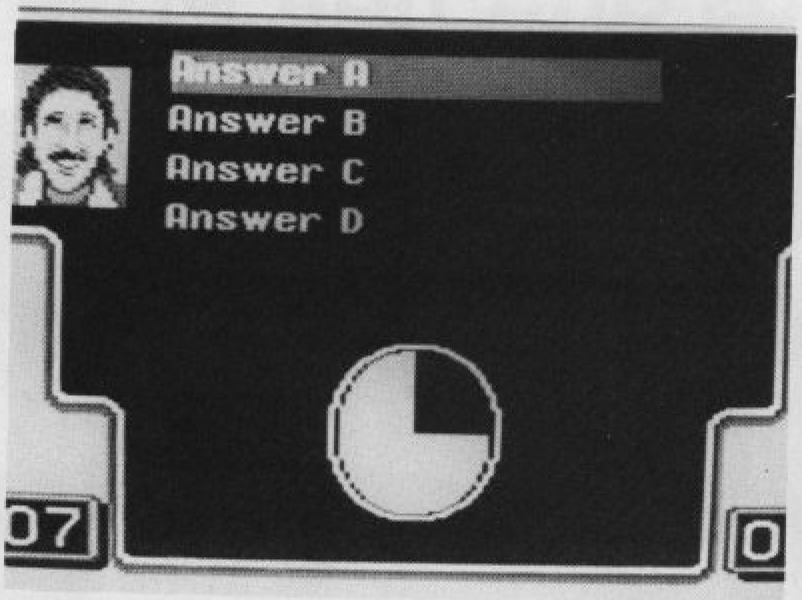
Yes folks its A Question of Sport time again – introducing Bungling Bill Beaumont, David 'the yawn' Coleman, Ian Botham and all your other favourites in this computer conversion of Britain's most popular TV sports quiz program.

In actual fact Elite offer viewers of the computer screen a new hero – one Steve Wilcox – Midlands lad, Lotus Elite driver, and part owner of Elite software. Yep, 'thrifty' Steve Wilcox as he is known in the trade makes a starring appearance in his own game – and why not.

His specialist subject is soccer which is strange considering he is a Walsall supporter. But then – life can be strange. The other guests are pretty strange too. I haven't got a clue who any of them are. Bill and Ian are clear enough though.

The game follows the TV show very closely – the quiz being split up into six rounds.

If you have never seen the TV show (Where you been, mate?) the rounds



▲ *What happened next – not the best round.*

are: Pictureboard – here questions are asked individually to each team member. The players choose a box from the numbered grid. These squares then flip revealing a symbol representing a sport. There are a wide range of sports including soccer, cricket, horse racing and tennis with a mystery question mark symbol for a randomly selected sports question.

If you get the right answer you notch up two points, get it wrong or run out of time and your opposing side get a crack at the question to earn a bonus point.

▼ *Pick a square and a question.*



The questions are always multiple choice – the player making his election by moving the cursor to the required answer. The time factor is represented by a circle which colours in to the sound of a loud buzz – reach for the volume time.

"Home or Away is another individual round in which players can choose either their specialist subject – for one point or an 'Away' subject for two points. The same bonus and time out rules apply here as in they do in all rounds.

What Happened Next is just what it says it is. You choose the answer which



▲ *Quick Fire round is best on ST.*

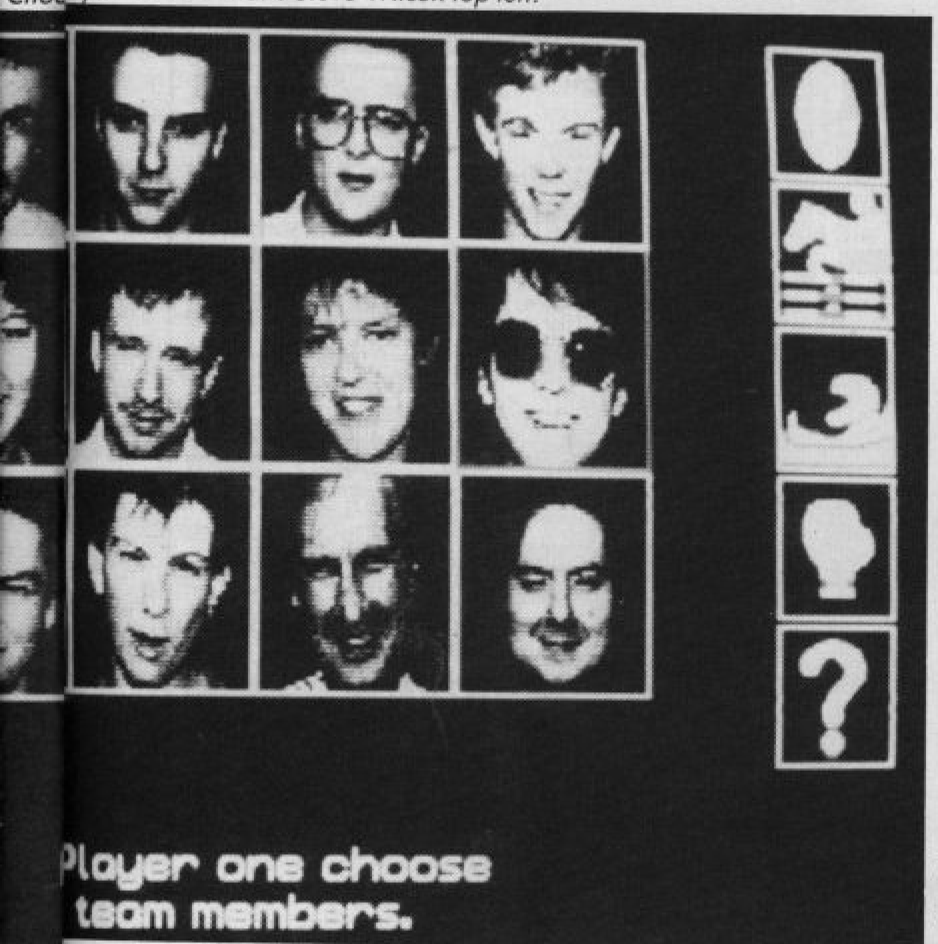
▼ *C se*



ON SPORT



Choose your team – that's Steve Wilcox top left.



completes the event. This is one aspect of the game that doesn't convert particularly well. The problem is you tend to forget the exact wording of the question by the time you get to a bonus attempt if your opponent has failed. It doesn't quite work without the visuals.

Again Mystery Personality is slightly flawed as well because if your opponent guesses wrong you can almost get to the right answer by a process of elimination.

The Quick Fire round was the best for me. A head to head against the computer or a frined in which you race to make the correct choice of answer from the ones listed. Excellent fun this. The final round is another bout of Pictureboard – asking the questions in the squares that remain.

The instructions state that Elite have attempted to minimise repetition of the questions by stacking them in five blocks – the idea the computer prompting you to load a new block of questions from time time. Of course, there is a finite number of questions that the disk can store – so that eventually you are going to start recognising certain questions. This is unavoidable if you think about it but it makes the computer game no different to the original board game – which is why there is a booming trade in expansion sets for board games. Will there be addition expander disks for a *Question of Sport?*

Director of the company and former C+VG employee Bernard Dugdale said: "We are looking at a number of expander packs – including further question disks and possibly specialist subject disks on say soccer of cricket."

So how does it play and is it worth getting. I would say yes – if you are a fan of the programme, like quiz games in general, or the type of question coin-op machines you find in pubs. I do – I love 'em as my bank manager will testify.

A quiz game is a difficult thing to undertake. Surprisingly two companies have attempted it now through the medium of a licensed quiz – Domark with *Trivial Pursuit* and now Elite with *A Question of Sport*. It's dead simple and doesn't have any bells or whistles to speak of – even on 16-bit – its really playable though, you'll find your self having just one more go, which is exactly what I am going to do now I have finished this review.

OK Ok, I know, you want the answers to the questions. I haven't forgotten, I have been a bit naughty though because I made the one up about the Australian lady's knicker elastic. The others were legitimate, enough though – Bristol City and Steve Davis of course.

ST

► GRAPHICS	53%
► SOUND	60%
► VALUE	49%
► PLAYABILITY	71%
► **OVERALL**	**75%**

UPDATE . . .

Full marks to Elite for having all versions on sale at the same time. There is also a BBC version which is available from Superior Software at two pounds less than the Elite versions.

▼ *A question of a lot of dosh at fifteen quid.*



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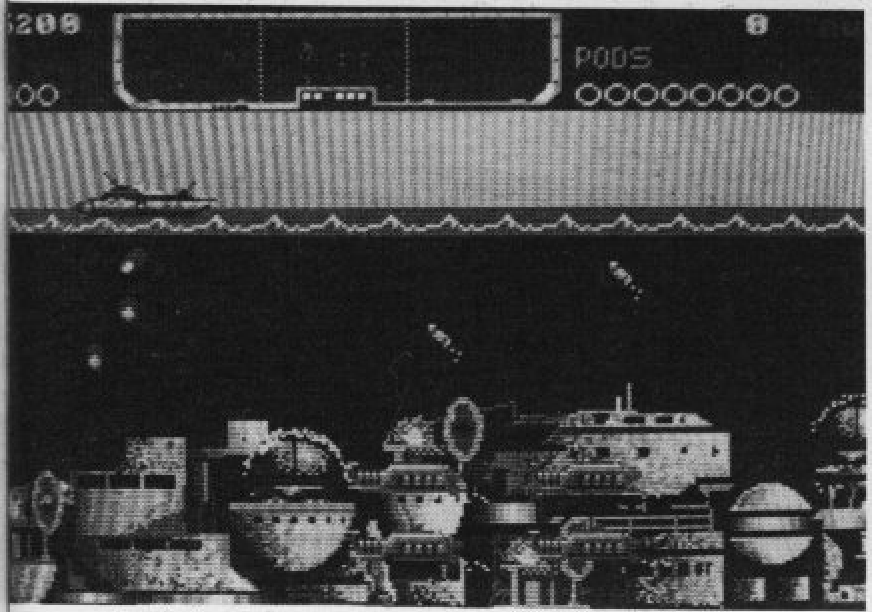
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THE DEEP



▲ *Depth charges away.*

► MACHINES: SPEC/AMS/C64/ST/AMIGA/IBM PC.
► SUPPLIER: US GOLD.
► PRICE: SPEC £8.99 CASS, £12.99 DISK, AMS/C64 £9.99 CASS, £14.99 DISK, ST/PC £19.99, AMIGA £24.99.
► VERSION TESTED: AMIGA.
► REVIEWER: JULIAN RIGNALL.

I must confess that in all my years of arcade going, I've never seen, yea, even heard of this obscure coin-op. Or of the Cream Corp from whom this title was apparently licensed. Still, someone at US Gold must have seen the machine somewhere, because they "snapped" up the rights.

The game is an odd one – as an arcade machine I'm not surprised that it sunk without trace, if it ever emerged in the first place – but as a computer game it's quite jolly.

The player takes control of a ship, which floats at the top of the screen. Subs and other undersea vehicles and creatures move across, and launch missiles and mines, which are dodged by moving the ship left or right. To defend itself the ship drops depth charges, which drift slowly to the ocean's depth, destroying anything they touch.

Occasionally an enemy wreck releases a capsule which floats to the surface. If this is collected, a helicopter appears and drops off a supply box, which endows the ship with either guided or more powerful depth charges, extra speed or a pod.

Tapping the ALT key when a pod is picked up turns the ship into a mini-sub, and the player can dive to the bottom of the screen and collect the glowing orb on the sea floor. When the sub returns to the surface, the ship appears again and the screen scrolls along to where the next orb is located.

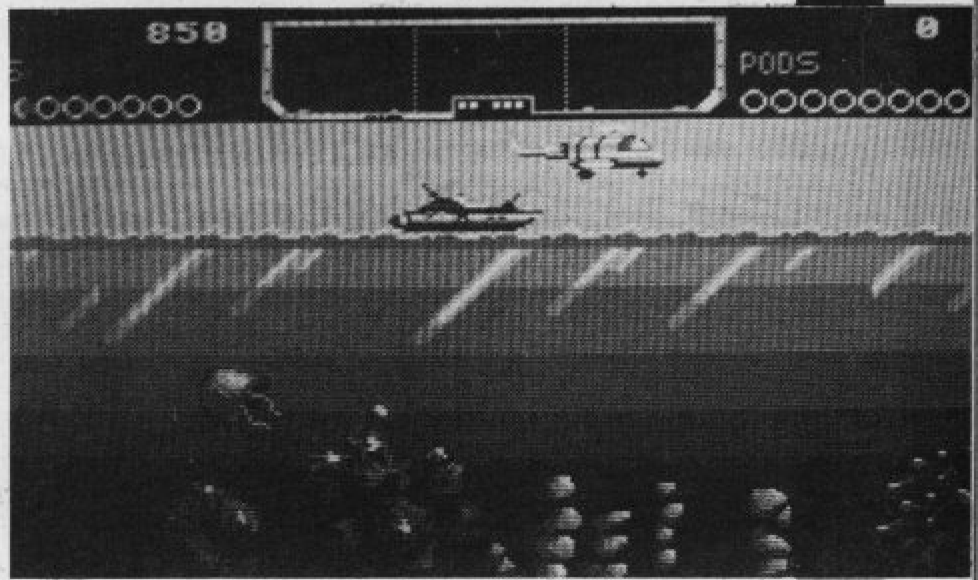
When three pods are collected the ship is confronted by a boat which is approaching at ramming speed. Missiles are fired to stop it before it makes contact, and the boat goes on to battle a submerged mothership, which is bristling with emplacements. If these are all taken out, the first stage is deemed complete.

Next comes a Missile Command-style section. A convoy of ships are sailing from the harbour to the open sea – but the enemy are launching missiles from the ocean depths. Using a crosshair sight, the player takes them out before they make contact.

After that the scene returns to one similar to the first, only with a different seascape and more enemy submersibles.

The Deep is quite an addictive game, but it lacks depth (no pun intended). It's more of an 8-bit concept, really, and not one that I expect to see on the Amiga for £25 – as a 16-bit budget title it would be fine. The gameplay is fun and kept me amused for a couple of hours, but I can see its appeal waning considerably in the long-term. There just isn't enough variety to sustain interest.

AMIGA	
► GRAPHICS	66%
► SOUND	83%
► VALUE	33%
► PLAYABILITY	63%
► OVERALL	**58%**



▲ *Underwater shooter.*

UPDATE . . .

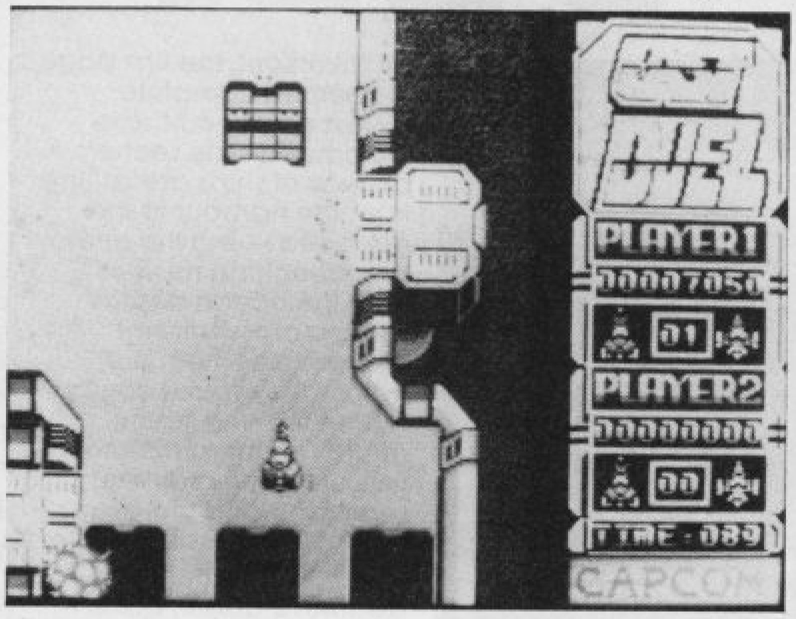
The Deep should translate to all formats pretty well – it's very simplistic, after all. Spectrum, Commodore and Amstrad versions should be fun, and are far better value for money than the over-processed 16-bit versions.

As for ST and IBM owners, the same criticisms mentioned above will apply. The Deep offers fun – but it's expensive fun!



◄ *Missile command-like screen. Stacks of fun this bit. Pricey though.*

LAST DUEL



► **MACHINES: SPEC, C64, AMS, ST, AMIGA.**
► **SUPPLIER: GOLD.**
► **PRICE: SPEC £8.99 CASS/£12.99 DISK, C64/AMS £9.99 CASS/£14.99 DISK, ST £19.99, AMIGA £24.99.**
► **VERSION TESTED: ST.**
► **REVIEWER: TONY DILLON.**

To say that this game bears more than a passing resemblance to USG's other coin-op release this month, *LED Storm*, would be a little unfair. It's only every other level that bears the similarity.

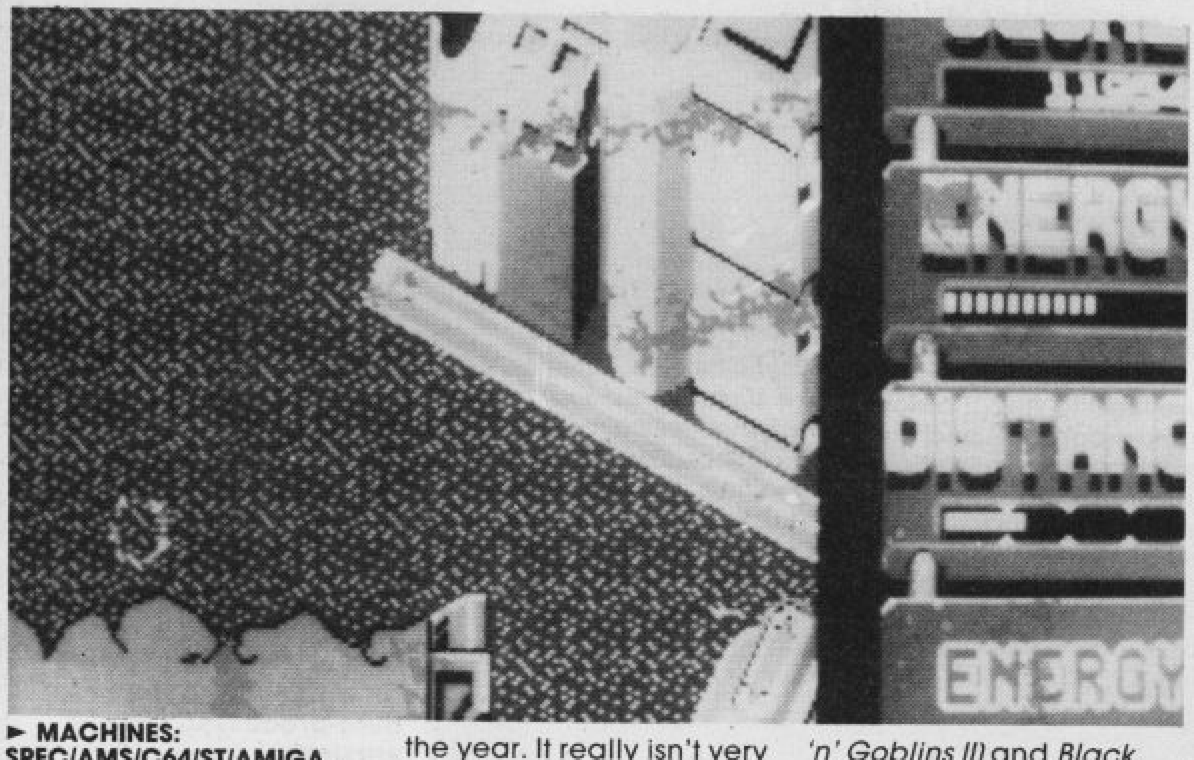
You are some kind of lone warrior battling against evil for the love of your woman. Well, you're alone when you're not playing in two-player mode, that is. You are a motorcyle rider, racing upwards along a vertically scrolling landscape, battling big guns, gun emplacements and enemy riders. Play two-players and you call the assistance of an airborne craft, which you would think would make the game a little easier. No way. When in two-player mode, you get twice the enemy.

As you scroll northward (with a bit of left and right scrolling to add variety) you come across obstacles – holes in the road are one of them. These can be driven around, provided there is the room, or you can jump over it. But you have to make sure that there is no air traffic above when you leave the ground and ensure that you land on terra firma.

Guns line either side of the roadway, and little soldiers hide behind barrels and fire at you. Suicidal car drivers wait on either side of the road in wait, and when you pass, they take you out.

But it's not all bad. Pods lie in the road, and when shot, they leave little capsules. Drive over them to collect them, and bingo – progressive weaponry. Build a fan-like series of bullets, as well as side firing lasers. All come in pretty handy.

Last Duel is hard, granted. Well, it's more than that, it's very hard. It seems that the only way



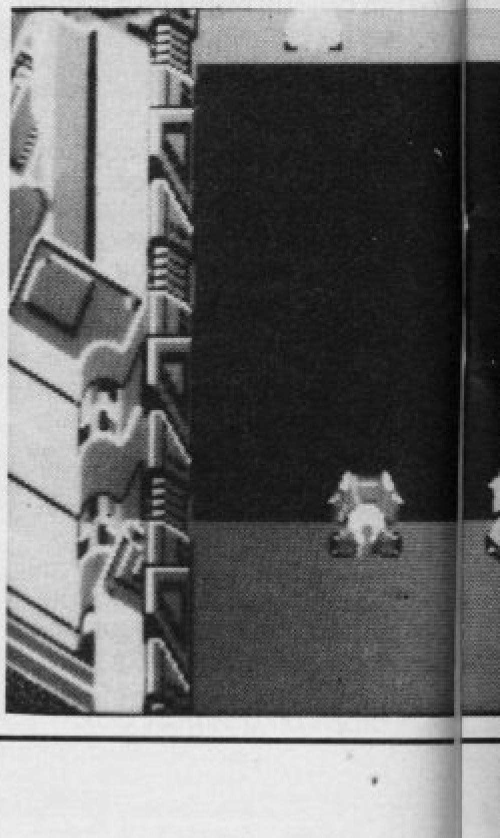
► **MACHINES: SPEC/AMS/C64/ST/AMIGA.**
► **SUPPLIER: US GOLD.**
► **PRICE: SPEC £8.99 CASS, £12.99 DISK, AMS/C64 £9.99 CASS, £14.99 DISK, ST £19.99, AMIGA £24.99.**
► **VERSION TESTED: ST/SPEC.**
► **REVIEWER: JULIAN RIGNALL.**

I don't like to start a review on a negative note, but it has to be said that *LED Storm* is one of the most feeble arcade games of the year. It really isn't very good.

So why did US Gold buy the rights? Well, when they signed their deal with Capcom, they secured the licence to convert the next ten Capcom titles, and unfortunately *LED Storm* is one of them. I suppose that's the way the cookie crumbles – in such a deal you get brilliant titles like *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts (Ghosts 'n' Goblins II)* and *Black Tiger*, and turkeys like *LED Storm*.

The game is basically a derivative of the old *Bumpin' Buggies* theme which was popular about five years ago. The player takes control of a car, viewed from overhead, and races up a vertically scrolling road. Pressing fire makes the car jump, which is useful for leaping on and destroying fellow road hogs, and also housing over holes in the road.

There are nine levels of very similar action, and the objective is simply to race to the end of each. An energy meter on the right of the screen ticks down as the car zooms up the screen, but fortunately extra energy can be picked up by running over





you're going to get anywhere is to drive very slowly, but as you're up against the clock, that tends to mean that you still don't get very far.

The graphics are quite nice. The scrolling is a little slow, and the left and right scrolling is downright appaling. The sprites are quite smoothly animated, but the collision is detection is a little on the stingy side. On the whole the game is reasonable.

Not a stormer, but not dire. Well, at least it's better than LED Storm.

ST

- ► GRAPHICS 76%
- ► SOUND 68%
- ► VALUE 40%
- ► PLAYABILITY 52%
- ► **OVERALL 55%**

UPDATE . . .

All other versions are being let out at the same time. The Amiga version features enhanced graphics, sound and playability and is generally a much better game. The Spectrum version is monochrome, obviously, but still features the same level of playability.

The C64 version looks like it's going to be quite good, with smooth scrolling and stacks of playability. The Amstrad version will contain all the fun of the Speccy version, with colourful graphics.

LED STORM

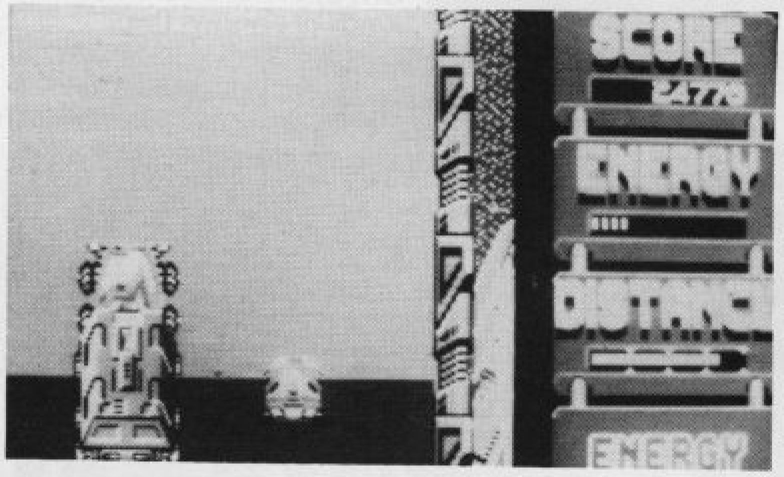
fuel cans, or passing one of the three checkpoints *en route*. Should all energy be used, the game ends.

If the car falls through a hole in the road or crashes into an obstacle, it's replaced – but vital energy is lost in the process.

And that's *LED Storm* in a nutshell.

The ST conversion is weak, and suffers from a major fault: it's far too easy. The game is already simplicistic, and this is further compounded by the fact that it's possible to complete all nine levels with little practice. The graphics are pathetic, with poorly-drawn backdrops and sprites that lack definition. Sound is good, though, with the ST's normally tinny sound chip producing an atmospheric tune – without the use of samples!





The Spectrum version is far more playable and is a lot tougher – but the gameplay is still very simplistic and not particularly addictive. The graphics and sound are alright – it's just the gameplay that's lacking.

LED Storm would make ideal fodder for the Kixx budget label – in fact I'd more than likely recommend it at budget price, but as a full-price game it just doesn't make the grade.

ST

- ► GRAPHICS 43%
- ► SOUND 86%
- ► VALUE 21%
- ► PLAYABILITY 43%
- ► **OVERALL 41%**

SPEC

- ► GRAPHICS 71%
- ► SOUND 70%
- ► VALUE 39%
- ► PLAYABILITY 55%
- ► **OVERALL 52%**

UPDATE . . .

The above criticism is valid for all versions.

Reviews

BAT

► **MACHINES: C64, SPEC. AMS.**
► **SUPPLIER: OCEAN.**
► **PRICE: SPECTRUM, AMSTRAD, C64, CASSETTE £9.95, DISK £14.95, AMIGA, ST, £24.99.**
► **VERSION TESTED: C64, SPECTRUM.**
► **REVIEWER: TONY DILLON.**

Oh me. I could have a lot of fun with this opening. After all, there must be hundreds of different Batman cliches I can use to open and pad out this piece. But I won't. I'll get on with the review.

This is the second Batman undertaking Ocean have, well, undertook, the first being that wonderful Filmation production. This one is, strangely enough, a conversion of the movie (?), due for release sometime next year, just as soon as they start filming it.

You play the Caped Crusader himself, minus Robin the Boy Wonder (as usual), as he battles through not one, but two adventures in his struggle to uphold justice in this unjust society we live in.

Firstly, the Penguin is making a nuisance of himself. Batman sets out to put a stop to his 'demented squawkings'. Once he's done that, it's down to the fun house at the local funfair for a do or die battle with the Joker.

Rather than use that plot and come up with an arcade game which, let's face it, would have worked quite well, Special FX have come up with an arcade adventure.

The map is arranged as a semi 3D scroller. Left to right is smooth scrolling, and at certain points in the scenery (doors and suchlike) you can flip in or out of the screen.

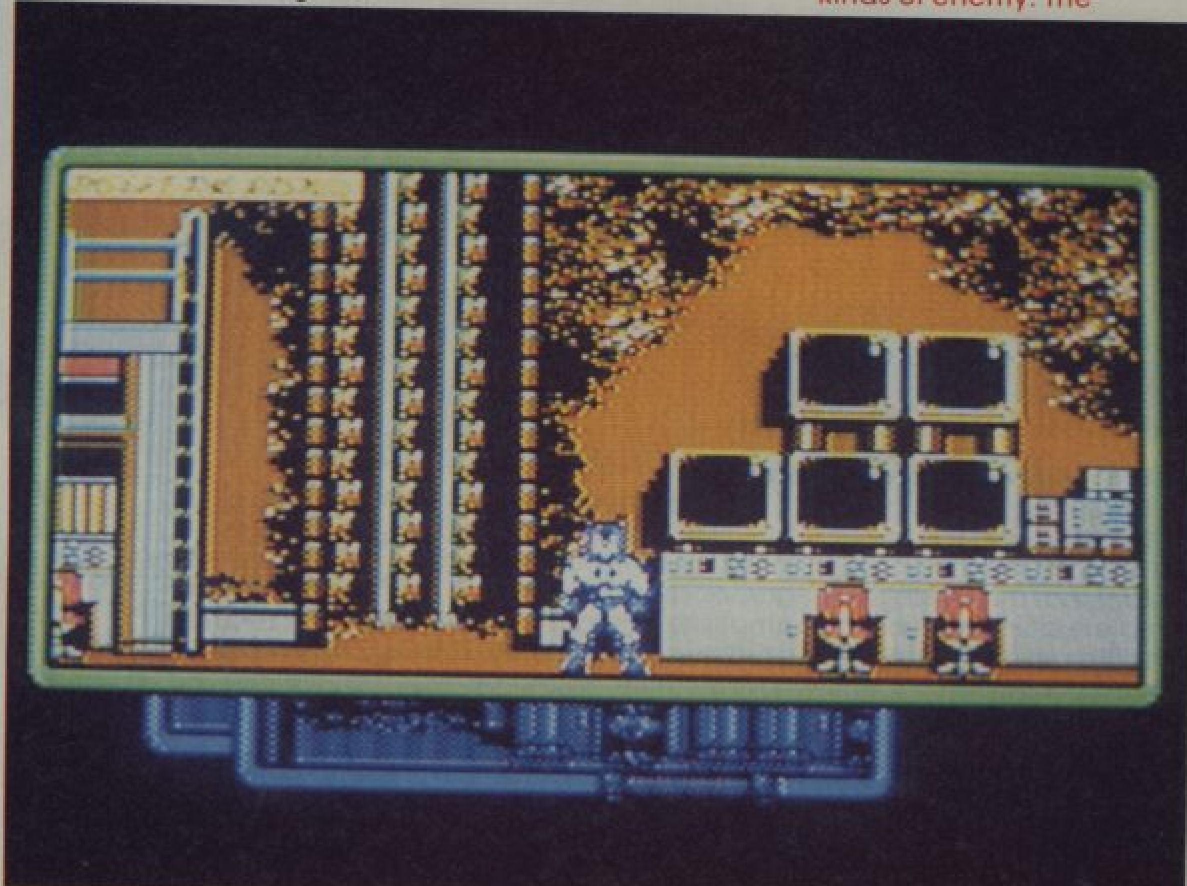
As it's an arcade adventure, it's obvious you're not going to get anywhere until you find some objects, and these are to be found in boxes with the bat-symbol on the side. The batarang is a handy item, as is the lockpick.

To stop you from getting anywhere are various kinds of enemy. The

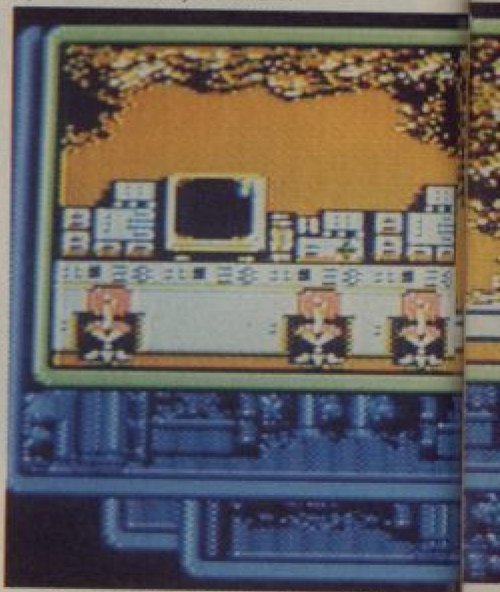
▼ *Batma-a-a-an.*



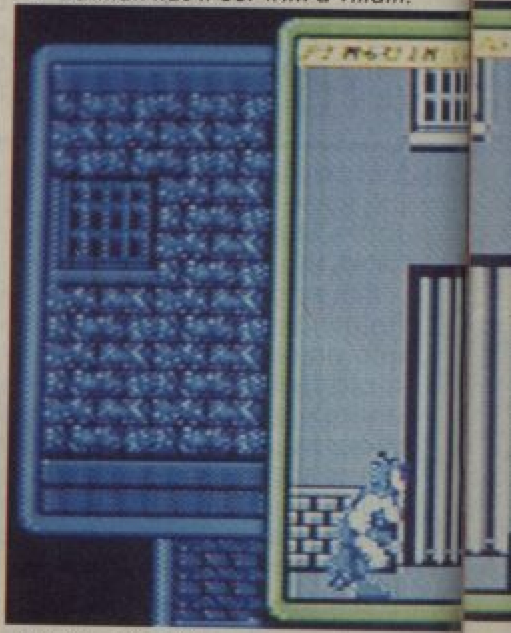
▼ *The Caped Crusader gloves.*



▼ *Where next, Batman?*



▼ *Batman has it out with a villain.*



▼ *The action blurs.*



MAN







smallest, and least harmful are the robit penguins. These roll around, no taller than your waist, occasionally spitting out the odd bullet here and there. Then there are the knife throwers. These will only throw from a distance, so stay close to them, and they're harmless. Hardest of the lot are the armed guards. These will stand anywhere and shoot you. The problem is, you're Batman. Anyone who knows their Batman will know that it's against his code to kill anyone. He can't even hurt anyone. All he's allowed to do is to hit them to stun them for a short while so's he can get past.

The main manipulation is fairly simple. Face front, pull down and press fire and you go into the menu system.

There are five icons in the centre of the screen and all round the screen are pictures of anything you've collected. The five icons are, turn tune on/off, drop object, return to game, use object and quit game.

The graphics are 'Holy bat socks' good. The detail and animation of all the sprites is crisp and the screen flips smoothly.

As you move onto new screens, the next overlays the former one, but never perfectly, giving that 'comic book' impression.

A tune plays throughout, but is nothing more than a parody of the Batman tune. In game effects are nice, not brilliant, but nice.

Quite a fun game but, to my mind, not nearly as good as the first one. Nice packaging, though.

C64	
► GRAPHICS	85%
► SOUND	77%
► VALUE	71%
► PLAYABILITY	75%
► **OVERALL**	**74%**
SPECTRUM	
► GRAPHICS	86%
► SOUND	82%
► VALUE	85%
► PLAYABILITY	89%
► **OVERALL**	**89%**

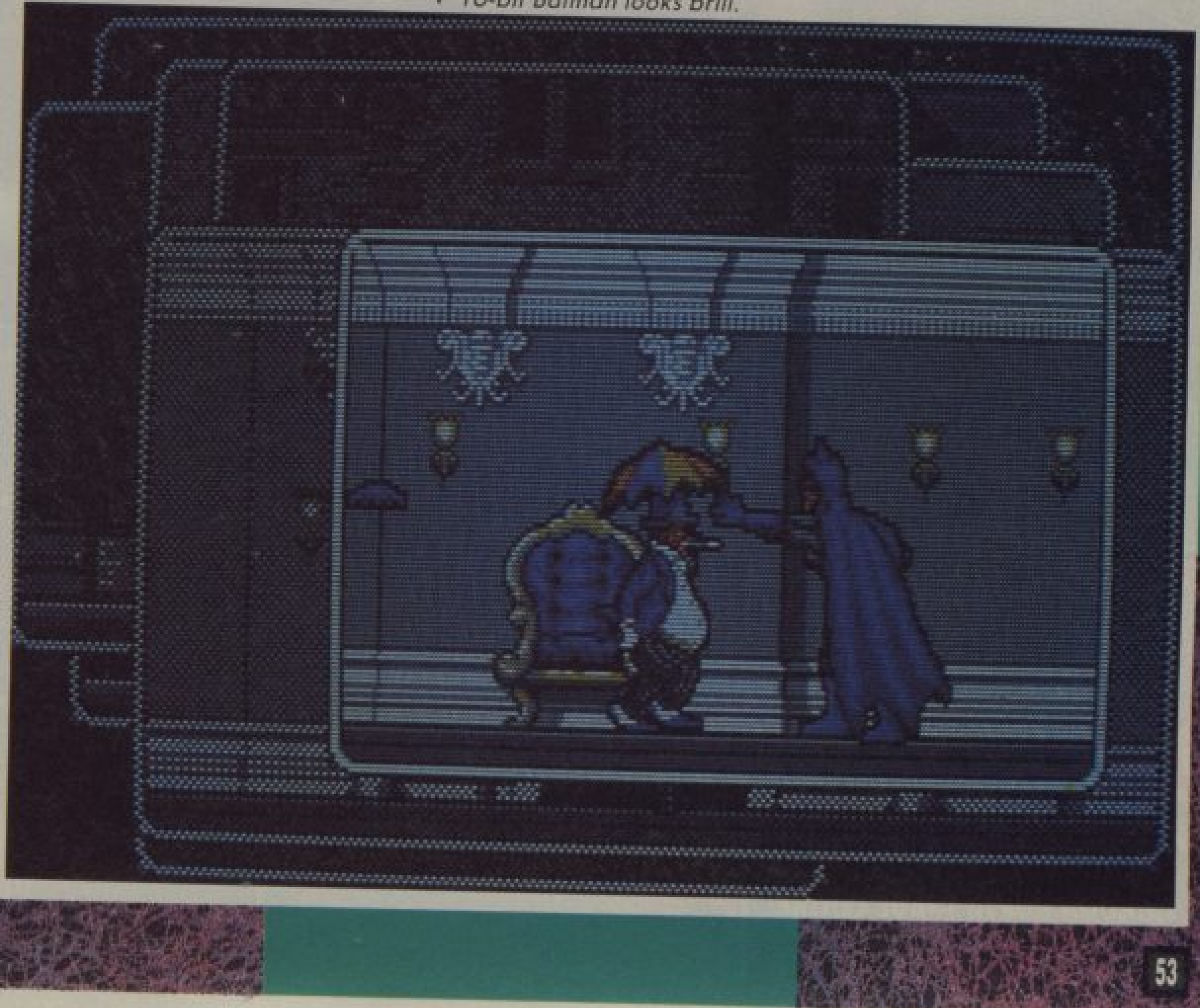
UPDATE . . .

All versions of Batman are now on sale. The Amiga version feature the original Batman theme tune.

▼ *Fight an' fump.*



▼ *16-bit Batman looks brill.*




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G.I. HERO

► SUPPLIER: FIREBIRD.
► MACHINE: SPEC CASS, C64, AMSTRAD.
► PRICE SPEC: £7.95, COMMODORE £9.95, £12.95 DISK, AMSTRAD £89.50, £14.95 DISK.
► VERSION TESTED: SPEC CASS, C64.
► REVIEWER: CECIL McGRANE.

In the beginning there was Commando. Commando begot green beret. These seeds of unoriginality grew and grew until GI Hero came about, would it live up to its illustrious predecessors?

Peace documents have been stolen by enemy spys and someone has to get them back. You as GI Hero (the christening must've been great) are given the job, predictable huh!

As you are being flown out suddenly the engine cuts and you find yourself parachuting groundwards clutching your canine pal – killer the dog.

Just before you land



▲ *Menu offering battle options.*

killer wriggles free. Can you find him and retrieve the documents.

GI is an Arcade side-on-view, flick screen adventure. There are no neverending attacks from enemy soldiers as in Green Beret. In fact enemy troops are very few and far between. Ammunition runs out pretty fast too, so look for extra clips which can be found scattered about the landscape. Incidentally, the landscape mostly looks exactly the same, which creates a "haven't I been here before" attitude.

Fortunately, finding Killer the dog brightens the whole thing as any enemies that approach will now be savaged by your four legged friend.

Now and then you'll come across gaps in the undergrowth, through which lie even more bland jungle landscapes. Eventually you reach some caves. If you face GI towards screen and press fire, up pops a menu screen from which you can choose many options, from deciphering codes to changing batteries. Batteries go with the torch which you will need to find your way around the darkened caves.

Sound FX are extremely sparse, just the repetitions sound of a cricket whining out of contempt. May be he hates the landscape too. Nice graphics with sufficient use of colour, although the main sprite is covered by a mask which shows a lack of programming care.

Furthermore the GI's walk is far too slow and looks far too passive.

Three to eight goes is the most I'd give this in the lastability stakes. No variation, hardly any sound and to frustrating to enjoy. Hard game to get into, easy game too get out of. Now wheres that Operation Wolf cassette.

C64

► GRAPHICS	61%
► SOUND	25%
► VALUE	40%
► PLAYABILITY	41%
► **OVERALL**	**43%**

UPDATE . . .

Speccy and Amstrad versions are out now, with the Commy version to follow in the new year. 16-bit versions look doubtful. Maybe its just as well.



▲ *Duck – the Russkie is aiming at your neck.*

Reviews

HYPE

► **MACHINES: ATARI ST.**
► **SUPPLIER: EXOCET.**
► **PRICE: £19.95.**
► **REVIEWER: CIARAN BRENNAN.**
► **VERSION TESTED: ATARI ST.**

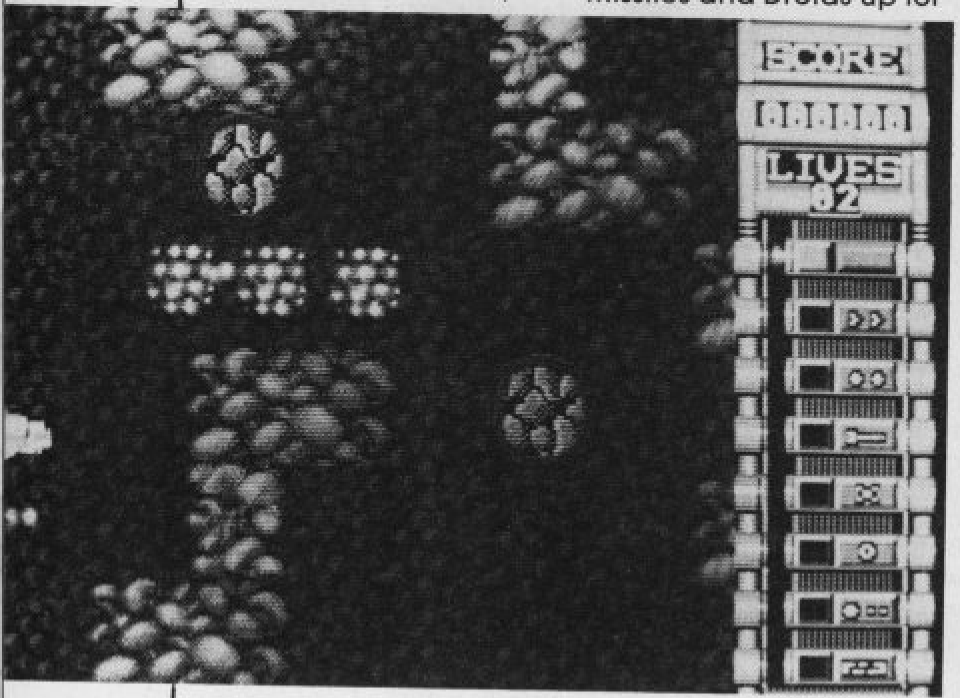
Having played *Hyperdrome* extensively I'm still undecided as to whether I'm doing it properly or not. It's supposed to be a progressive scroller, with Double Fire, Missiles, Assault Shells, Homing Missiles and Droids up for grabs. But try as I might, I couldn't seem to collect anything except a slightly longer bullet and a fairly useless satellite.

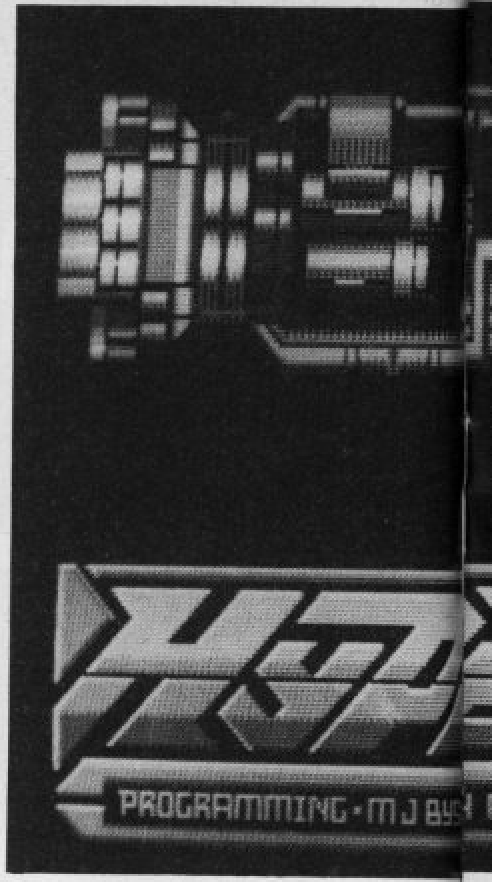
The idea is to fly a basic ship along the left to right scrolling Hyperdrome, destroying obstacles and airborne attackers. Most destroyed obstacles reveal an icon, which, like Esso petrol tokens, award the ship with something useful – the more tokens the better the add-on.

The description of these add-ons is the only thing in the whole package which caused me to smile: each item is named and a brief explanation of its use follows in brackets – so after Shield comes 'They can't hurt you' and my personal favourite, Homing Missiles comes complete with 'Give them no chance.'

To be fair the ship is nicely animated, but the backgrounds are appalling – they're bland, jerky, ugly and incorporate a totally pointless and garish spot of token parallax. The graphics are so basic that you'd be forgiven for mistaking this for a C64

▼ Firs 16-bit 'Puke 'em up.'



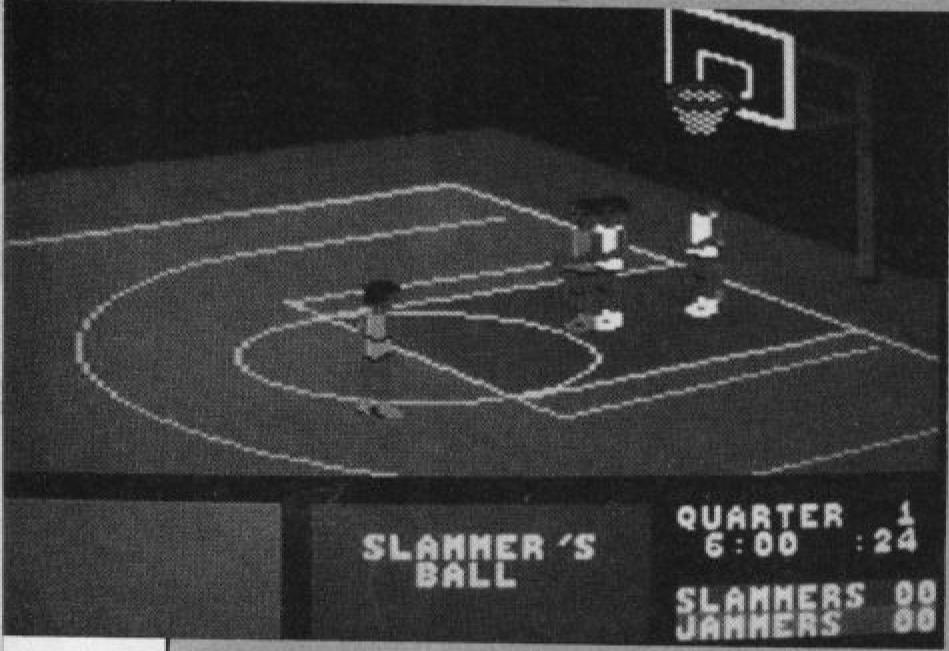


▲ *Nice mothership – naff game.*

FAST BREAK

► **MACHINES: C64.**
► **SUPPLIER: EA.**
► **PRICE: C64 CASSETTE £9.95, DISK £14.95, IBM £24.95.**
► **VERSION TESTED: C64.**
► **REVIEWER: TONY DILLON.**

▼*No prizes for Fast Break.*

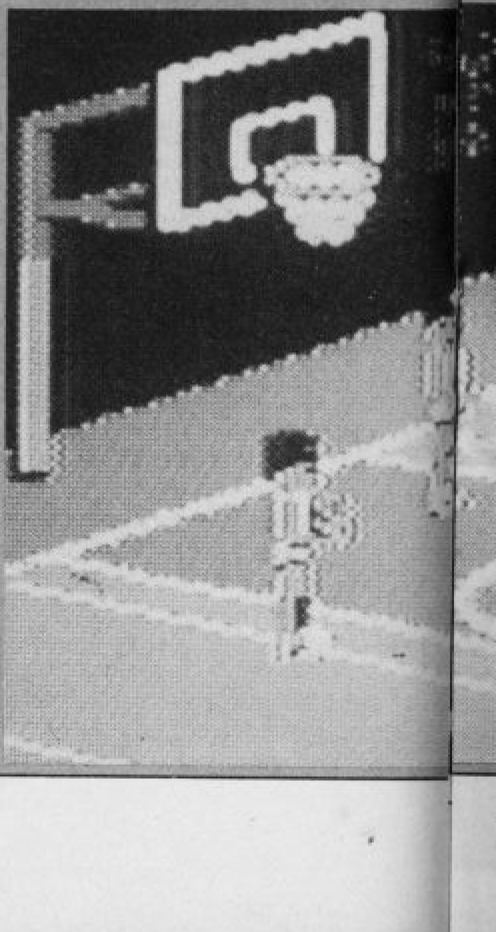


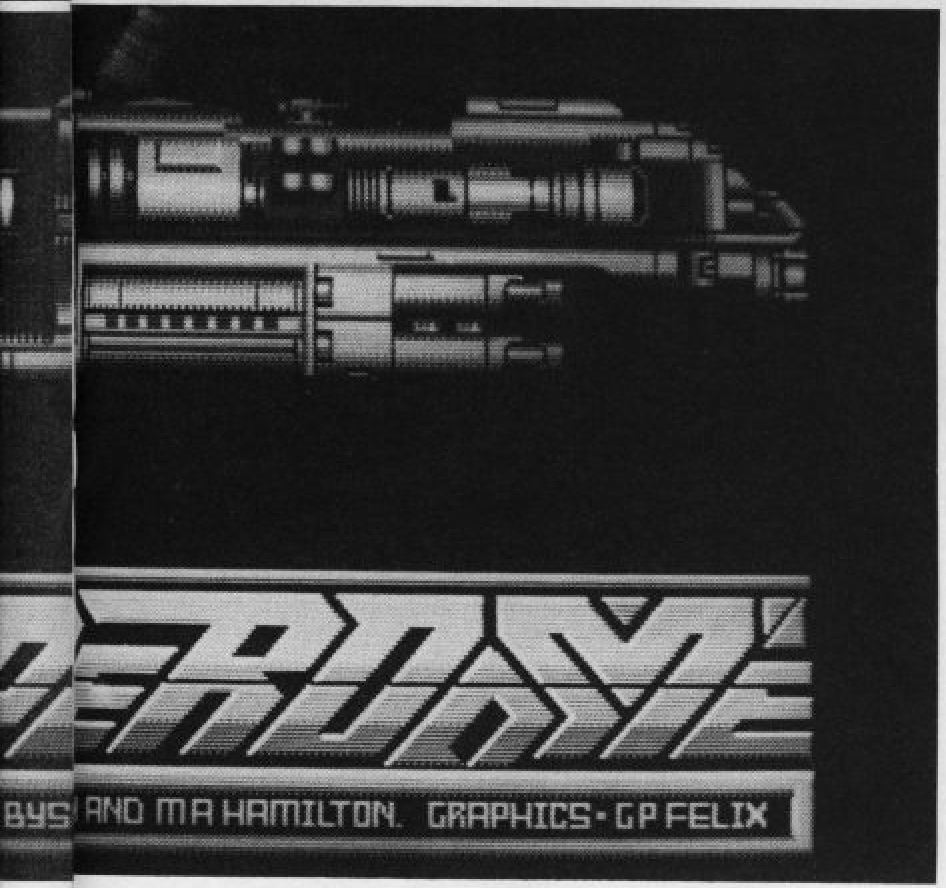
I don't know if I'm right when I say this, and I'm probably not, but from my understanding, this new Accolade series of sports simulations is supposed to bring in some revolutionary styles of games and gameplay. This can't be right, because if it is, then how come this Fast Break thing is no different to all other basketball games that have been released, i.e. not very good.

It's a three on three basketball game in a two flip-screen court, each of the screens being a mirror image of the other. You control one of the players at a time, normally, in the style of most multi-player games, the one nearest the ball being the one under control. This is indicated by the player flashing.

Where the other two players stand is decided between matches and at half time. You are presented with a playbook of moves, and it's from this that you have to choose four or, make up four of your own. The playbook contains fifteen moves which govern where the other two players will be standing when you aren't controlling them.

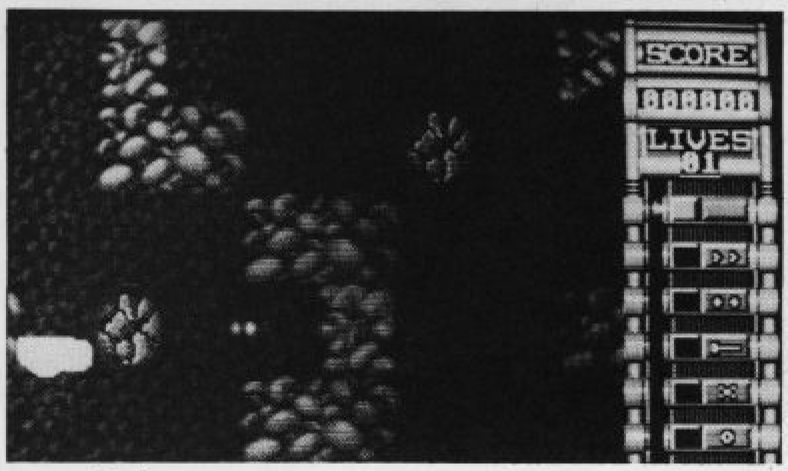
Player Control couldn't be easier. Normal joystick





e.

ER DROME



▲ *Pointless power-ups.*

budget shoot 'em up.

In fact it's all reminiscent of a C64 budget game.

Usually even the poorest of games can be enhanced slightly by a few well placed sonic effects – but not this one. The title music is an assault on the ear-drums, while the only spot effects were the sound of hailstones hitting a tin roof (representing explosions) and a sort of 'bloop' every time a token is collected.

So to sum up, what you've got here is an ugly, ear-scraping, slow and boring shoot 'em up, without so much as one notable feature. And to round it all off, play stops continually (and unnecessarily) to allow disk access. This is probably the first game I've ever played where I complained that I was starting with too many lives. If software shops haven't already got a bargain bin for 16-bit software, this could be a good reason to start one.

ATARI ST

► GRAPHICS	37%
► SOUND	31%
► VALUE	29%
► PLAYABILITY	28%
► **OVERALL**	**24%**

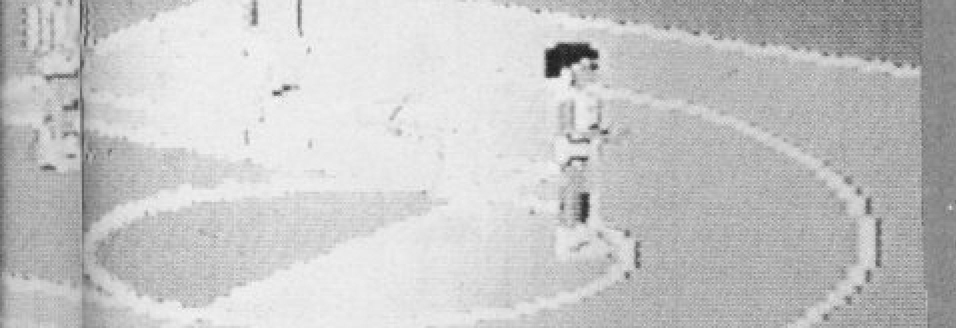
UPDATE . . .

It's an ST-only product thank goodness.

directions apply, and passing is simply a matter of pointing in the appropriate direction and pressing fire. Note, the game won't let you pass unless you're facing a player you can pass to.

Shooting is even easier. Shooting consists of standing anywhere on the screen where your opponents goal is visible, and holding down fire. Your man will jump into the air and take aim. Release fire at the apex of his flight, and he'll release the ball and it'll sail into the hoop with the greatest of ease. Release the button too soon, and it'll bounce off the rim or miss completely.

▼ *Harlem Globetrotters need not worry*



The computer proves a more than worthy opponent, the problem being that it is perfect. It controls all of it's three players at once, which means that it has them all standing in the right position, passes perfectly, intercepts all your shots and never misses a shot.

Two player is a bit more fun, but the fun is still short lived due to the limitations of play and the complete lack of any facilities to improve your skills (i.e. an advanced play mode or just skill levels).

The graphics aren't bad. They serve their purpose and the backgrounds are rather pleasing. They do border on being overly blocky though, and the characters have a tendancy to glide rather than walk.

Not a terrible game, but hardly an advancement in the world of sports sims.

C64

► GRAPHICS	61%
► SOUND	46%
► VALUE	54%
► PLAYABILITY	69%
► **OVERALL**	**52%**

UPDATE . . .

Electronic Arts must have got advance warning of Tony Dillon's less than complimentary review of Fast Break as no other versions of the game are planned.

It is odd really that EA should launch a less than brilliant basketball game when you consider they brought us the excellent one on one.

COSMIC

► MACHINES: ATARI ST/AMIGA/C64/SPECTRUM/AMSTRAD CPC.
► SUPPLIER: OUTLAW.
► PRICE: ST/AMIGA £19.99.
► REVIEWER: CIARAN BRENNAN.
► VERSION TESTED: AMIGA.

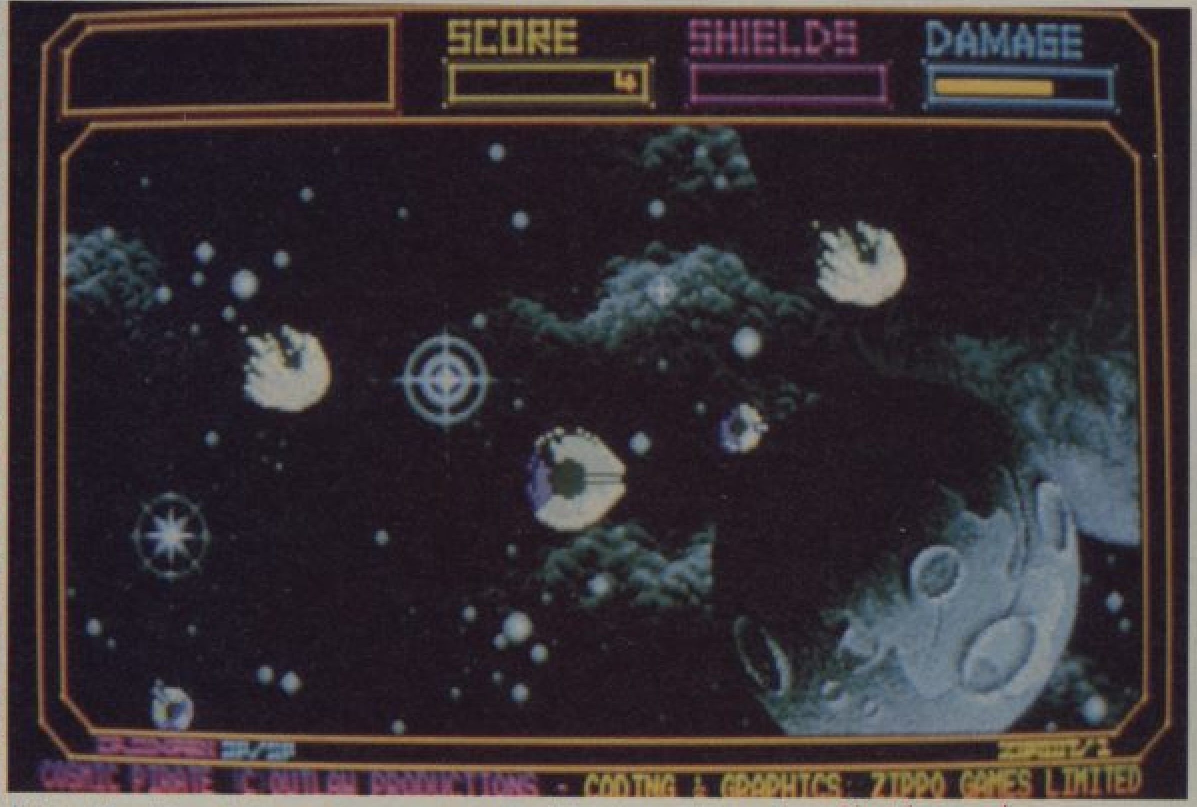
Guy Manly's been accused of a crime that he probably did commit, so either he pays his dues to society by indulging in a spot of porridge – or he steals a small, heavily-armed spaceship and takes his chances living the life a brigand on the Barbary spaceways. What would you do if you were Guy Manly? Well it just so happens that you are, and the decision's been made for you – so strap yourself in and set a course for NEST51.

NEST51 is a mammoth space station run by a dangerous criminal organisation known as The Council. The station's deep space location and excellent facilities make it an ideal base for criminal activities, and The Council's fostering of new young pirating talent makes this an obvious starting location for your new career. The Council's services don't come cheap however, they charge a small percentage (well, 95% of your takings actually) for use of the space station and initial investment capital.

A budding pirate can choose from two types of mission, with a number of levels available for each. One of these involves flying over a small planet, using its innocent aircraft for target practice – the other, more lucrative, task is to enter the open space lanes in search of bounty-laden spacetrucks.

Whatever you choose, the mission can first be practised from the comfort of one of seven 'simulators', which are modelled on the game itself but are played out using vector graphics. Simulators allow the pilot to familiarise himself with the ship's controls without encountering any real danger – however, this also means that no money can be made in this section. Most simulators are free, but a couple (including the Asteroids clone, Disasteroids) eat into your meagre resources.

When a pilot feels confident with his flying abilities, the next step is to enter real space in search of an elusive spacetruck. A large spacemap is explored by moving through a series of toll gates, and following a grid map towards the target. Toll gates can only be utilised if enough attack craft are dispatched along the way and the relevant points total is earned. Later grid maps include icons representing other pirates in the vicinity which must also be destroyed with extreme prejudice. There's no room for sentimentality when the stakes are this high.



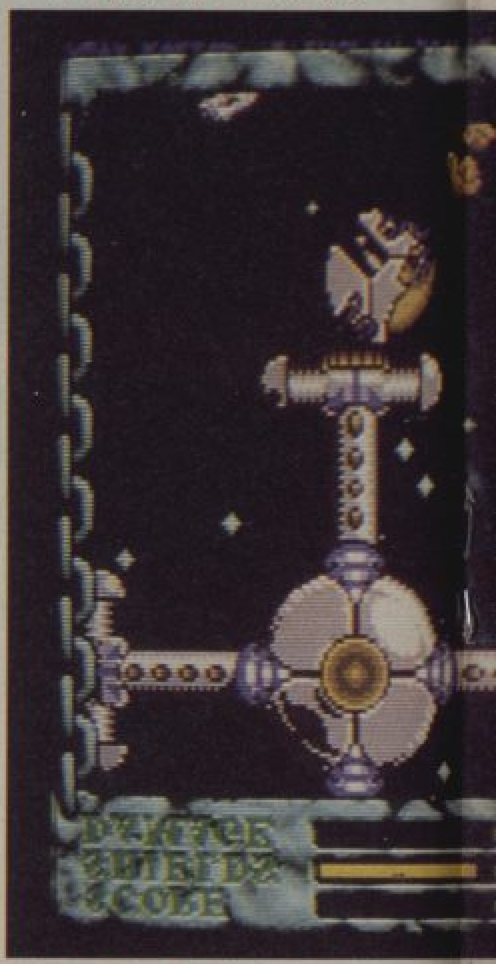
▲ *Blast those rocks.*

When a spacetruck has eventually been captured and returned to NEST51, a cash prize is awarded in relation to its size. After The Council has taken its chunk, the remaining cash is yours to spend on better shields, faster power units and more destructive weapons. In this fashion the whole galaxy can eventually be explored, and every spacetruck (from the smallest 'minnow' to the mammoth 'whale') plundered.

When you consider the depth of play contained here, Outlaw would be forgiven if the cosmetics were a little weak, but this is far from the case. The



▼ *Build your ship – Elite-style.*



PIRATE



▲ *Superb graphics from newcomers – Zippo.*

graphic style may not be to everyone's taste, but it's beautifully executed and I doubt if anyone will fail to be impressed by the hyperspace sequence in particular.

Zippo games is the team responsible for this production, and Outlaw could hardly have asked for a more professional result. Starting with the impressive and user-friendly options screen, every tiny detail of this package is well considered and beautifully executed. The ability to save up to five separate games allows the task to be finished gradually, with the slowly increasing difficulty rate making the challenge lasting and compulsive.





▲ *The ubiquitous galactic map.*

AMIGA

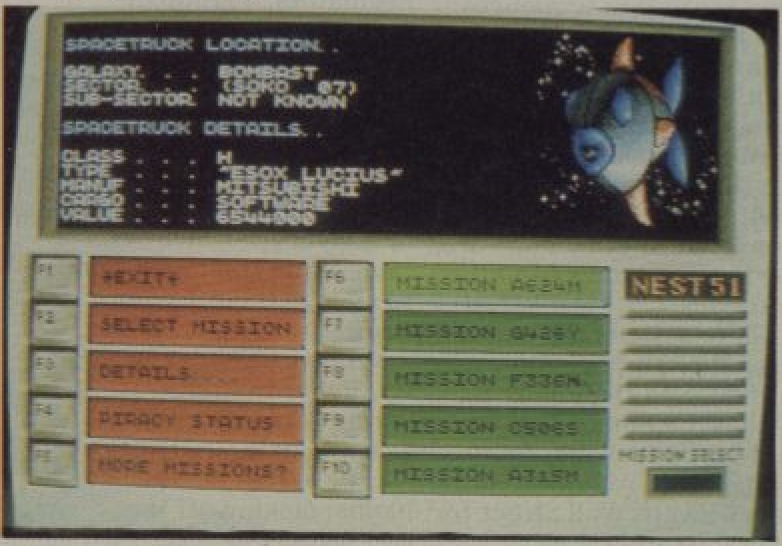
► GRAPHICS	84%
► SOUND	83%
► VALUE	87%
► PLAYABILITY	91%
► **OVERALL**	**89%**



UPDATE . . .

Both 16-bit versions are currently available and awaiting take-off. On the 8-bit front, expect to see all games on the shelves by early Spring, with the Spectrum version looking particularly impressive at this early stage.

▼ *Highly absorbing game.*





Ring out the old – bring in the new. Fresh films for 1989 from the man who makes Barry Norman look young – Ward R. Street.

Maybe it's the 'greenhouse' effect but January is hot – as in **Red Heat** (18), the friction you get when a pair of ill-matched cops strike sparks off each other. Seeing as one of the detectives is Arnold Schwarzenegger, you won't be surprised to find that plenty of other things get struck too.

It's first blazing few frames as Captain Ivan Danko of the Moscow homicide squad punching a suspect round a sauna before slugging him out into the snow to cool down. But Muscovite drugs baron Rostavili doesn't take too kindly to 'Iron Jaw's strong arm tactics so he snuffs his partner then flees to the West.

Luck's against him. He's soon in the hands of the Chicago police, picked up for a minor traffic offence. The Americans agree to his return and Danko's sent to collect him from wise-cracking Detective Art Ridzik's tender care.

But the escort goes wrong. Danko is ambushed and Rostavili is sprung by American confederates. So the ice cold Russian and slobbish Yank are forced into a reluctant partnership as they track the fugitive – and Glasnost doesn't count when Danko starts crashing police department cars around the streets of Chicago!

Not the most original situation but the teaming is inspired. Arnie's strong and silent image is the perfect foil for irreverent Jim Belushi. Danko's frosty formality and haughty superiority are chalk to the cheesy Chicago cop's quick wit and disregard for authority. Their comic chemistry keeps the heat on even between the larger than life action sequences. Red Heat is White Hot!

There's blazing lead in another of the month's movies. You may think that Westerns are old fashioned but this one has just armed itself with a holster full of **Young Guns** (18), some of the biggest names from the brat-pack.

There's Kiefer Sutherland (Lost Boys) as a poetic young outlaw. Lou Diamond Philips (La Bamba) as the half-breed teenager taunted by his racist fellows. Charlie Sheen swaps Wall Street for the range and Casey



▲ *Arnie in Big Heat.*

Siemaszko and Dermot Mulroney make up the merry band along with Emilio Estevez, as a crazy young hoodlum called William H. Bonney – better known as Billy the Kid.

Together they're The Regulators, a group of orphans and runaways who work for English rancher Tunstall. When he's gunned down by a rival, LG Murphy, the law won't act because they've been bought off. But The Regulators, with the aid of lawyer Alex McSween, take it into their own hands to avenge their master's death.

Murphy's gang, The Ring, is tougher than the youngsters expected. Despite all their efforts to escape across the dusty plains, picking off the assassins as they go, they're eventually tricked into an ambush and Murphy and his posse of corrupt lawmen prepare to gun them down in cold blood.

There's enough action to keep you on the edge of your saddle, but what really makes Young Guns is how well written, acted and directed it is. It's a western for the eighties. The Regulators are real street kids – today they'd be running with the gangs of LA. And Murphy is the sort of corrupt business man you find in contemporary thrillers.

Despite some hilarious moments, including a sequence when Philips introduces his compatriots to the mystical traditions of the Indians and they all trip out on hallucinogenic cactus, the drama turns to tragedy as the gang faces certain death.

Tom Cruise, another young actor guaranteed to make girlies go weak at the knees, mixes up a right, royal **Cocktail** (PG) this month. If Young Guns is the dark origins of the American Dream, this tale of love and ambition among the Pina Coladas is its fulfilment in the eighties.

Cruise is Brian, straight out of college and possessed of heaps of enthusiasm and a pile of 'How To Succeed in Business' books. Bryan Brown is not Brian (Eh? – Ed) but Doug, an older, wiser bartender whose philosophy of life is based on bitter experience . . . or as this is a New York bar and not a Manchester pub, that's Bloody Mary experience.

Bryan teaches Brian how to pull the birds but his cynicism about matters sexual leads to them falling

▼ *Monkey business.*



▼ *Young Guns.*



out. Brian moves to the West Indies where he works a beach bar and falls for Elisabeth Shue. Then Bryan and his new bride turn up and Brian and Elisabeth fall out so Brian follows her to New York with Bryan and Mrs Bryan and . . .

You get the picture? So did hundreds of thousands of Americans who made it a blockbuster. I can only imagine that they were Tom Cruise fans because there's not much else to attract the casual viewer, though Miss Shue is very restful on the eye. For myself I prefer a sharper cocktail than this sweet concoction.

Something like **Gorillas in the Mist** (PG) which may sound like an exotic cocktain itself but is actually the true tale of Dian Fossey, who travelled to Africa to take part in a research project about the survival of mountain gorillas and decided that she preferred their company to that of her fiance and the wild country to the urban jungle.

Sigourney Weaver (Aliens) is superb as this single-minded woman, whose courage led her to make friends with the huge beasts, imitating their behaviour until they accepted her into the tribe. But her affinity for the apes drove her further from humans and made her many enemies, including the local gorilla hunters and corrupt officials who profited from their illegal trade.

Fossey's battle for the near-extinct colony eventually led to isolation from her old life and even the loss of a sympathetic boyfriend, played by Bryan Brown on leave from his bar job. In the end it cost her her life. It's a warts and all portrait, not shying from the negative side of her obsession, but in the end you can only feel admiration for her determination and courage.

▼ *Manhunter.*





▲ *Stormy Monday.*



▲ *Cocktail – ugh!*



Obsession is the theme of David Cronenberg's new shocker but unlike The Fly, most of the horror in **Dead Ringers** (18) is suggested rather than shown. Not that it's less gruelling without the gore. If anything this psychological shocker is even more chilling.

Jeremy Irons plans identical twin gynaecologists, neither of them named Brian. Indeed one of them's called Beverly, which could help explain why he's so mixed up. They're both brilliant in their work but somewhat bizarre when it comes to relationships. Some twins share clothes – the Mantle boys share women!

They play this little game until a neurotic actress enters their lives and Beverly falls for her. But the course of true love never runs smooth and she discovers their ruse. Beverly descends into madness and brother Elliot stays with him as they discover that blood is thicker than water . . . and more stomach turning too!

The effects which allow Irons to play opposite himself are excellent and he manages to differentiate between the twins quite brilliantly. There's no doubt he should share this year's Best Actor Oscar with himself. But as for Cronenberg getting Best Director – I doubt it. This film is just too uncomfortable!

If only **Manhunter** (18) was as starkly chilling in its portrayal of madness. It uses the promising premise of an FBI man called out of retirement to help track down a serial killer who only murders at the full moon. He has just four weeks to stop the next death. But his method involves getting inside the psychotic's mind, putting his family's safety and his own sanity at risk.

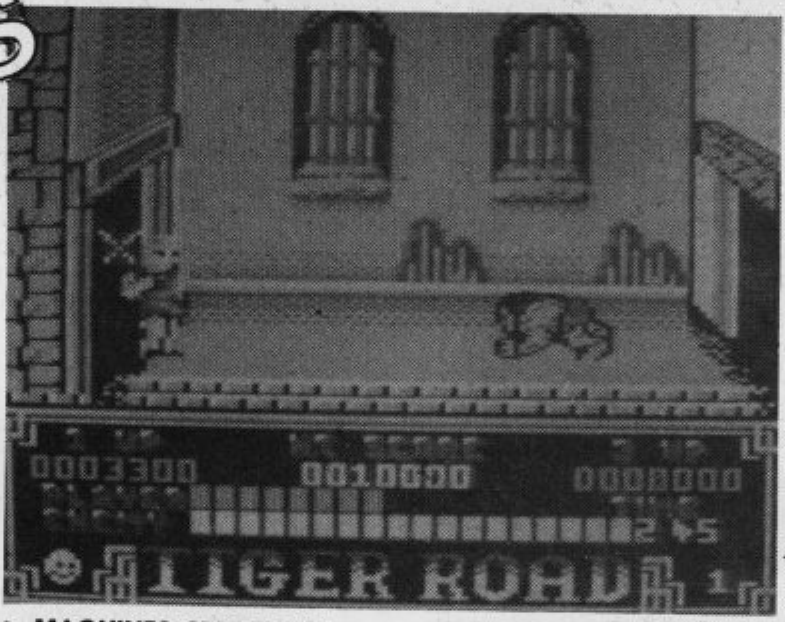
An interesting starting point but director Michael Mann is best known for creating Miami Vice and uses the same sort of designer settings, flash camerawork and rock-promo music in a tale which would be best told in a more restrained fashion. Manhunter is a reasonable two hours but should have been better.

January is obviously the month for style because **Heart of Midnight** (18) also wears its art on its sleeve. Jennifer Jason-Leigh (Jamie Lee Curtis' sister) is the frail young girl with a history of breakdowns who inherits a run down nightclub in a seedy area of town and uses it to break from her oppressive mother.

Almost immediately she's moved in things start to go wrong. The rooms above the club appear to have been decorated by the Marquis de Sade and there are strange noises in the walls and ceiling. And who is the stranger (Pete Coyote)? He claims to be a cop but we know better. Unluckily the promise of a sleazy, scary film is unfilfilled and it fizzles out at the eleventh hour.

BIG Screen

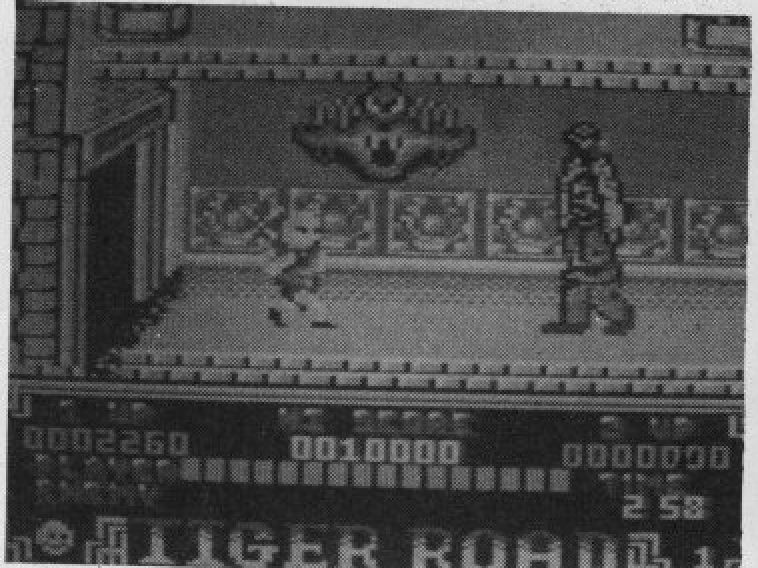
TIGER ROAD



◄ *Get down – a nasty bites the dust.*

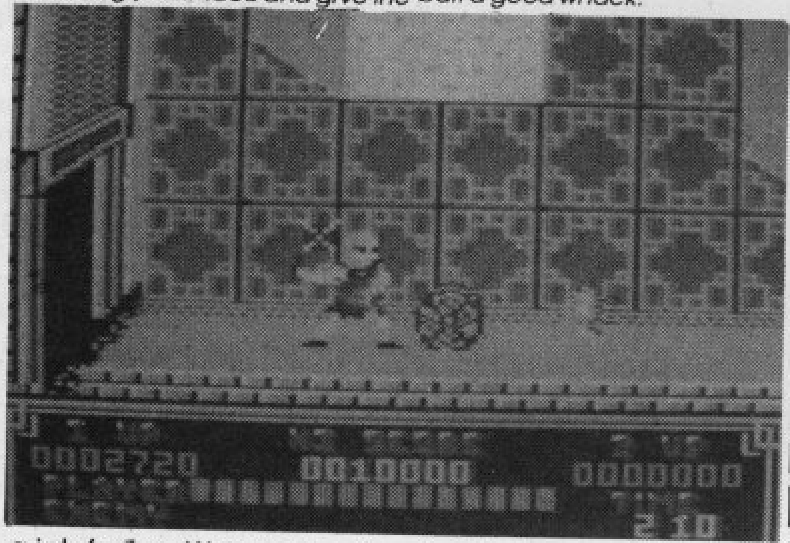
► MACHINES: SPECTRUM/ AMSTRAD CPC, C64/ST/ AMIGA.
► SUPPLIER: GO!
► PRICES: SPEC £8.99 CASS, £12.99 DISK, AMS CPC/C64, £9.99 CASS £14.99 DISK, ST £19.99, AMIGA £24.99.
► VERSIONS TESTED: C64, AMS CPC.
► REVIEWER: CIARAN BRENNAN.

▼ *Heave ho – look out below.*



The latest conversion of a Capcom coin-op to appear on the Go! label sets the player on a quest to free kidnapped children from the evil clutches of Ryu Ken Oh. It's not any old Joe Public that can carry out this task though – this is a job for Lee Wong, a beefy oriental with limited fighting moves but a very big weapon!

▼ *Swing your mace and give the ball a good whack.*



Lee travels from left to right along a scrolling landscape, either beating Ryu Ken Oh's brainwashed minions to death or avoiding them by leaping above their heads and scurrying along platforms. A power bar shows Lee's damage and a timer shows how long he has left to finish the current section – if either of these runs out, our hero loses one of his five lives.

The gameplay differs slightly from version to version, but the general idea remains the same. A door at the end of each section allows access to the next, with different obstacles to be overcome at every turn. Tasks vary from felling masses of enemies to dodging barrels (Donkey Kong style) and taking on massive nasty characters in solo combat.

The trouble is that no matter what the task is, the solution is always the same: just keep jumping and slashing and you won't go far wrong. The extra weapons don't appear to make any difference and none of the enemies is particularly hard to beat.

For all its faults, Tiger Road does have a certain charm, but the limited gameplay and sloppy bugs (such as the floating corpse) become more and more irritating. The sleeve claims that Tiger Road is 'practically four games rolled into one', it looks more like one game stretched into four. The package includes a voucher for entry into a competition to win a trip to Silicon Valley, but even this isn't enough to revive a poor game with very limited lasting appeal.

C64

► GRAPHICS	68%
► SOUND	54%
► VALUE	60%
► PLAYABILITY	61%
► **OVERALL**	**62%**

AMS

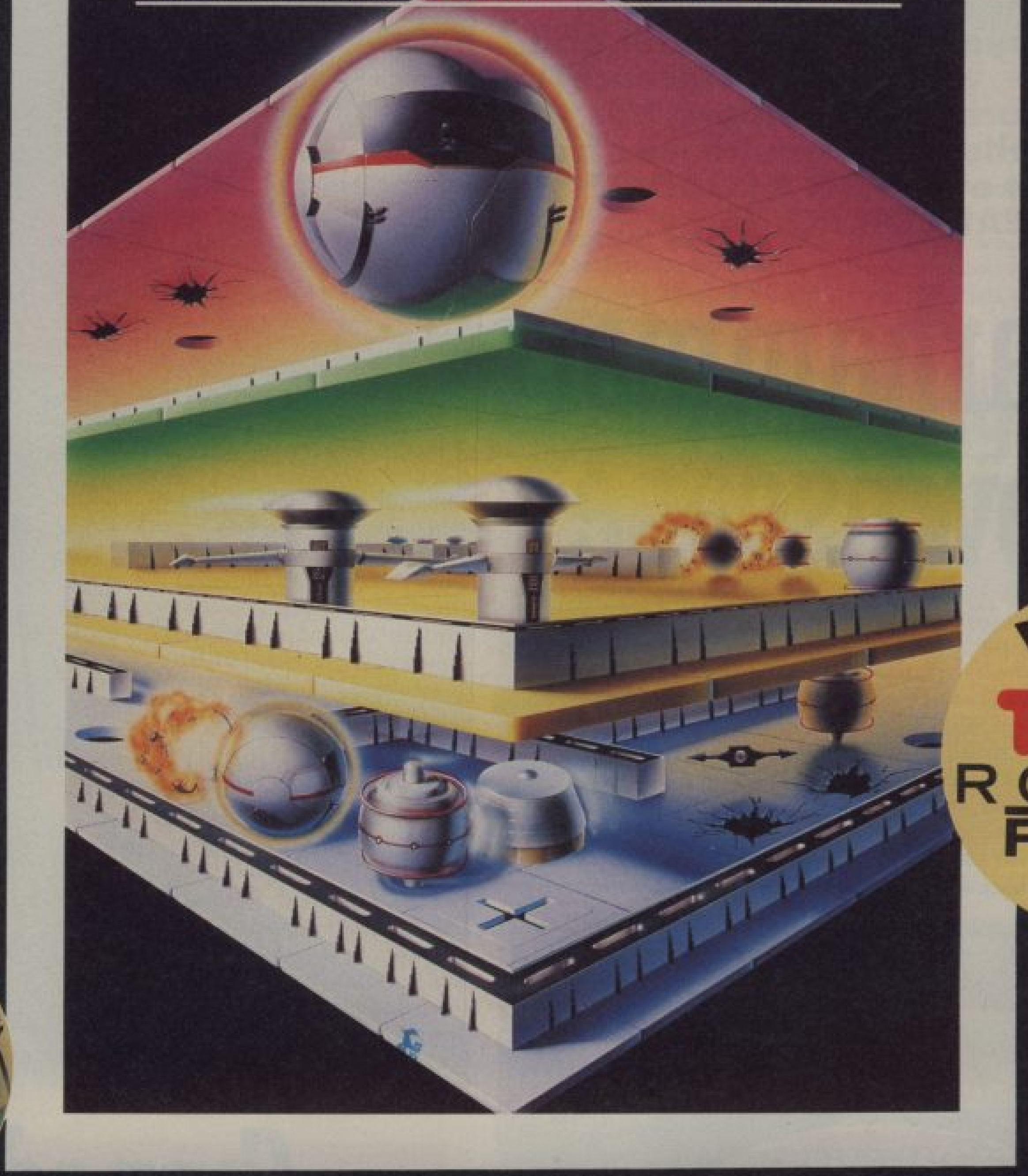
► GRAPHICS	52%
► SOUND	48%
► VALUE	44%
► PLAYABILITY	52%
► **OVERALL**	**49%**

UPDATE . . .

The 8 bit trio were available in time for Christmas and the 16 bit duo should have joined them by the time you read this.

ISS

INCREDIBLE • SHRINKING • SPHERE



WIN
— A —
TOMY
ROBOT!
FREE
PLANISPHERE
INSIDE PACK





Atari ST screens shown

The Sangfalmadore Run, a planetoid battle training arena, has been designed to push new recruits to the limits – trying their speed, strategy and reflex responses!

However, recent unexpected seismic activity has caused faults on the planet's surface and the collapse of tectonic tiles . . .

Colonel-in-Chief, Matt Ridley, frustrated by his desk-bound job, took to the controls of a fighter sphere to test his ability on the now unstable Sangfalmadore Run!

Take control of the Incredible Shrinking Sphere! Using your skill, judgement and razor sharp reactions, avoid collapsing tiles and assassin spheres.

Your task is to locate Colonel Ridley, but first you must survive the Sangfalmadore Run . . .

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AGM

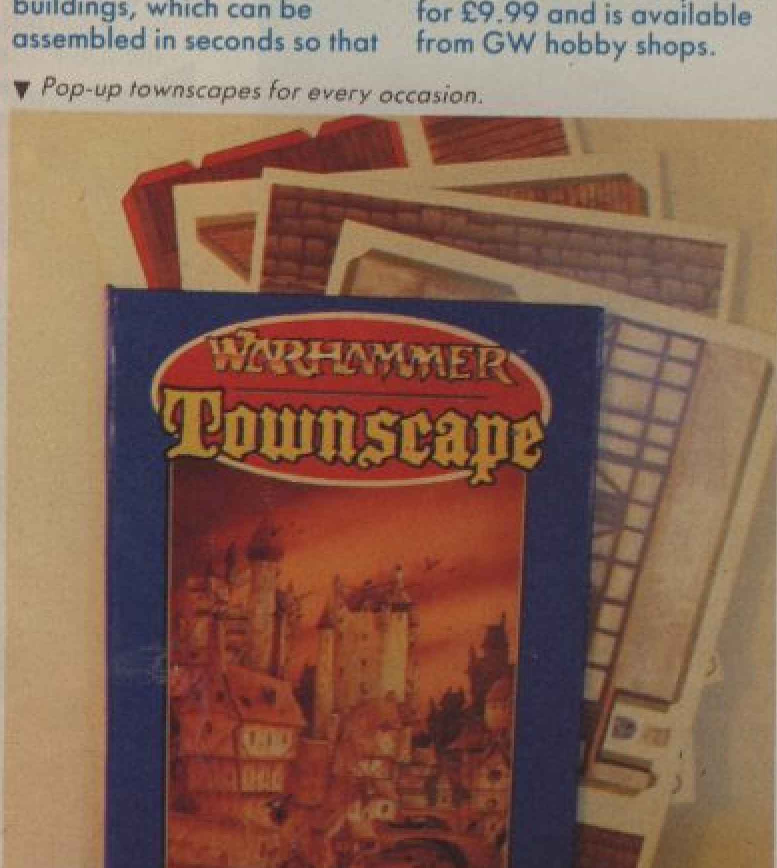
AGM is just three issues old. In that time our column aimed at role players (both computer and board – what's the difference?), adventures, war gamers, has snowballed. This month we offer our first ever WIN A LOAD OF AGM GEAR COMPO. Enjoy.

Warhammer Townscape

Although Warhammer Townscape is specifically designed for the Warhammer series of games, it can be used for many other RPG's if required. Basically, Townscape is a hardback book that contains loads of full colour, stiff cardboard buildings, which can be assembled in seconds so that they can be used as detailed settings by the GM.

Every conceivable building is covered and GM's who need detailed town background which can be constructed will find this invaluable. Townscape sells for £9.99 and is available from GW hobby shops.

▼ *Pop-up townscapes for every occasion.*



Yearly AD & D



▲ *Feb '89 – by Keith Parkinson.*

With the coming of the new year, C+VG readers may wish to make an impressive addition to their bedroom and also keep track of up and coming events by buying the AD+D Forgotten Realms calendar for 1989.

The artwork throughout the calendar is superb. The best of recent fantasy art. Full colour throughout, the calendar is divided up into to large sections. The first contains the great artwork, while the other contains a large area where you can mark in your appointments, previously arranged FRP games and any other occasions you consider important.

Some of the world's most famous fantasy artists have contributed their work to this calendar, namely Clyde Caldwell, Jeff Easley, Larry Elmore, and Keith Parkinson. TSR have combined their efforts to bring you 14 immaculately drawn portraits reflecting life in the dangerous lands of the Forgotten Realms for only £4.95.

Boatwars

Steve Jackson Games have brought all the murder and mayhem of the roads in 2038 to the water!!

Boat Wars – the latest STG release – takes Car Wars off the land and into the sea. These official rules give you the complete information for movement, combat and the construction of boats and hovercraft. Also included are full colour cardboard counters for all the vehicles in the game plus a large blue water map to play on.

Boat Wars is in fact a Car Wars supplement, and you will need the original Car Wars rules to play the game. The rulebook contains 24 easy to read pages and all the components come in the usual plastic pocket box.



▲ *More pocket sized games.*

Grenadier Dwarves

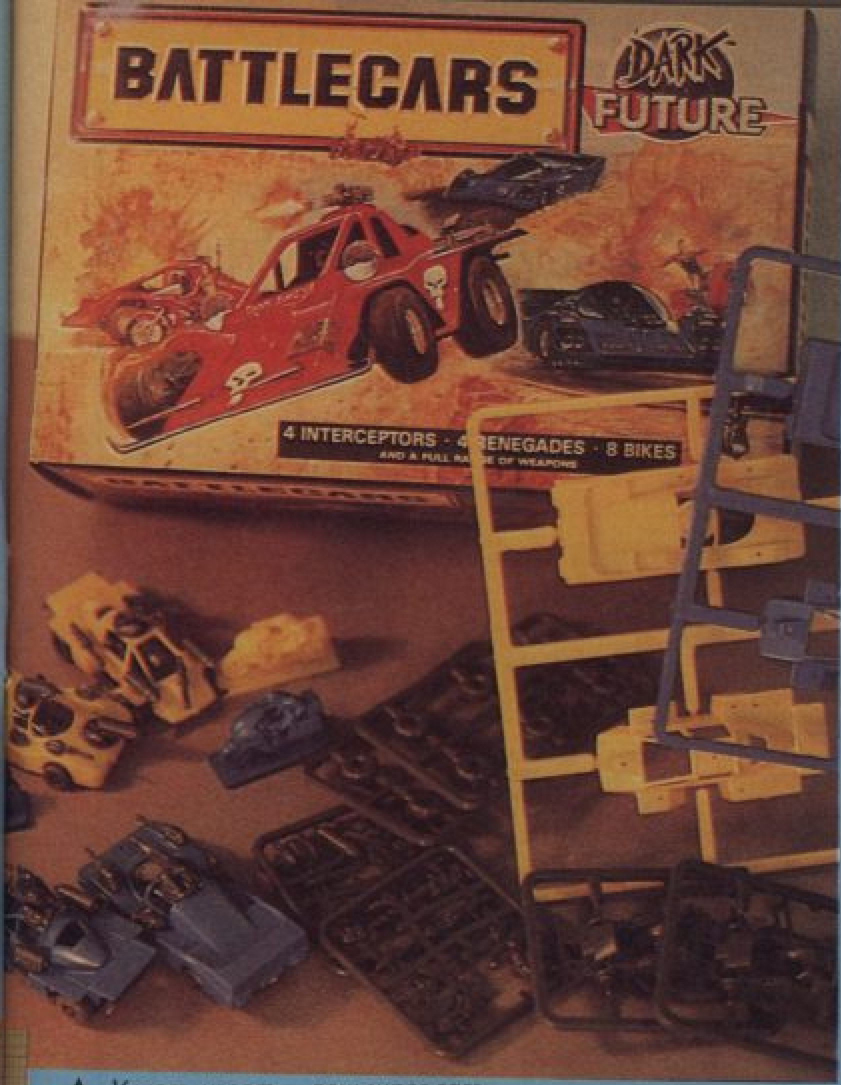
Grenadier have just released a Dwarven Battleset and a new brass dragon.

The Dwarven set – released under Grenadiers Fantasy Warrior line – consists of 12 highly detailed figures, depicting dwarves in various poses. Nine of them carry massive axes, while the other three carry banners or musical instruments.

The dragon on the other hand is one large figure that is ridden by a female warrior. This model needs to be assembled, and – unlike the dwarves – it requires a small amount of modelling expertise to stick the whole thing together.

Both models are just crying out to be painted and as they sell for £5.95 each they are affordable as well.

News



▲ Vroom, vroom – new super cars.

Dark Futures Sells-Out

Andy Jones, the events organiser at GW recently claimed that Dark Futures is moving out of FRP hobby shops so fast that GW can hardly keep up with the demand!! With the interest in the aforementioned game being so great, it comes as no surprise to find that GW have rapidly followed up the release of Futures with Battlecars, the first official expansion kit.

It offers 16 brightly coloured plastic vehicles. Plenty of cars for both the Renegade and Interceptors are present, as well as the obligatory motorbikes. Also included is a massive selection of weaponry and all for £9.99.

We have ten of these amazing packages to offer. For your chance to win write in and tell us which British car you would want to drive in Dark Futures – should you find yourself in the barren, speed crazed world in which the game is set. Send to C+VG Battlecars Compo, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.

Workshop Workin

Games Workshop's first release this month is something that the roleplaying world has been waiting for a long, long time. Fantasy Miniatures is a hard bound book that covers almost every aspect of the miniature painting hobby.



▲ The Miniature bible from GM.

Packed with 100's of full colour pictures, plus plainting hints and tips the book sells for a very reasonable £5.99. Any FRP'er who is into miniature models and wants to improve their painting techniques would find this book a sound investment, even if it does nothing more than inspire you.

Dragon Flight



▲ A Feast your eyes on Dragon Flight – a superb computer role playing game being coded in Germany by Thalion Software.

Many months of development have been lovingly expended on the project. We have our hands on a review copy now – and pretty good it is looking too – so read all about it in next months AGM.



◄ The hit role playing board game Battletech is about to hit the computer screen courtesy of top American software house – Infocom.

Packed full of graphics animated and full colour scrolling the game lets you pilot a Mech fortress fighting machine.

Resident RPG expert Wayne gives a review of the board game on page 76.

AGM

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MYTH

A new arrival on the adventure club scene, is Official Secrets, a club whose bi-monthly magazine, Confidential, is something different. Unlike the others, it is full A4 size, and is professionally laid out and printed, complete with banner headlines and artwork.

Since Official Secrets is an infant club, Confidential has yet to develop a clubby atmosphere. In the meantime, however, it is doing very nicely thankyou, with major articles by Tony Bridge, Mike Gerrard, Steve Cooke, Pat Winstanley, and Sandra Sharkey.

Official Secrets, although predominantly for adventure players, also caters for people who play any type of 'thinking' computer game. Membership, as well as giving access to a phone-in Helpline, automatically includes membership of Special Reserve, the software sales arm of the club. This offers a wide range of mail-order software.



▲ *Magnetic scrolls – backing official secrets.*

Clubs normally require an annual subscription, and Official Secrets is no different. The immediate reaction of a prospective member of a new club, is often "will it prove reliable, and outlive the duration of the subscription?" So who is behind Official Secrets, and is it just going to be another flash in the pan?

The club is run by Inter Mediates, a software PR firm headed by Tony Rainbird. If that name sounds familiar, then you won't be surprised to learn that Tony set up Telecom's Firebird label, and went on to found their top-of-the-range, to which he gave his own name – Rainbird Software. Tony's interest in adventures stems right back to his Telecom days where he was responsible for the Rainbird contract with Magnetic Scrolls.

With the backing of Inter Mediates, and its existing full-time staff, the set up is already in place to service the club.

"But what's this about a Scrolls' adventure for free? I hear you ask. The open secret is, that with every copy of the second issue of Confidential sent out to members, there will be a free disk containing a game written exclusively for Official Secrets. And if you're not an Official Secrets members, you'll be able to buy it through Special Review for £3!

It's called Myth and is set in the year zero BC. The Greek Gods are having a hard time of it. The trend is for Roman Gods these days, and apathy and degeneration has set in among Zeus' crowd. Zeus decides it's time they made a comeback, and sets about organising something that will make people sit up and think.

Calling all the Gods together, he announces that he is herewith withdrawing their godly status, and will only restore it upon each individual who is successful in a mission he will set them. There is a gasp of astonishment from the assembled crowd, followed by moans and groans at the prospect of losing their powers.

First in line is Poseidon, the Water God, who is set the task of entering Hades. In his quest, among other things, he will have to get the better of a Hydra, and will have trouble crossing a swamp. Now you'd have thought a swamp would have been a walkover (literally!) for a Water God, but the fact is, this one can't even swim . . .

Don't expect a full-blown Scrolls adventure. Myth is a mini-adventure, but don't be put off by that – it has other things going for it. Paul



▲ *Myth is a God-like game.*

Findley, its author, went out and bought £50 worth of books on Greek mythology, a subject in which he already had a great interest, before starting out on the game – so it's well researched. In terms of size, it will have about 20 to 25 locations.

"Originally Myth was to be about the size of the Fish minis," explained Paul. "But once I started on it, it just seemed to grow. It was supposed to take me about a month, but so far I have been on it for two . . ."

Small is beautiful is the motto for Myth. "There is so much space to play around with permitting stacks of text. Another use to which the spare memory is put, is in the subjects. There will be hardly any 'scenery' objects – pretty nearly everything described in the text will be an object in its own right, and yield a detailed description if EXAMINED. For example, each head of the hydra can be examined, and objects mentioned in these descriptions can, in turn, be examined.

As for graphics, there will be four pictures on the graphics versions, and they are up to the full standard that we have come to expect from Magnetic Scrolls. However, only machines for which the graphics can be directly converted from the ST originals will have them.

Myth might be 'mini' in comparison with the size of today's adventures, but it's a viable, highly playable, and entertaining adventure in its own right. If it takes off, Paul plans to turn them into a series – continuing with quests for each of the other assembled gods on Mount Olympus.

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AGM



▲ *Battletech – the world's favourite Role playing game?*

BATTLETECH

► GAME: BATTLETECH.
► SUPPLIED BY: GAMES OF LIVERPOOL.
► CREATED BY: FASA.
► PRICE: £16.95.
► COMPLEXITY: FAIRLY EXPERIENCED UPWARDS.
► REVIEWER: WAYNE.

Battletech is fast becoming one of the most popular board games in existence. Infocom will shortly release the computer version. But why is it so popular? And what is it all about?

Battletech is a game where each player takes control of a Battlemech – which is a giant robot bristling with various offensive and defensive weaponry. And you find yourself involved in a large scale war, that takes place in the 31st century. The Mec's – as they are affectionately known – start off in this game as pretty standard models. Basically they have a human like shell, with two arms, two legs and a head where the pilot sits.

The Mec's have various fancy names like Wolverine, Rifleman and Warhammer and each one is different. They can range from between 21 to 45 feet in height and 10 to 100 tons in weight, and can carry more firepower than a 20th century tank battalion!

In the introductory game, you are given standard Mec's so you can get to know how they fight, what you are capable of doing and how the Mec's suffer damage. However, once you are more familiar with the game you can create your own Mec's according to your own design.

When you open box, you find a two piece, full colour, interlocking playing surface, which is divided into hexes – six version sided geometrical shapes – which represent various forms of terrain which include hills, forests, lakes, deserts and scrub to name but a few. Your mode of travel i.e. flying, jumping, walking etc determines how far you can travel, and certain hexes restrict your movement accordingly.

The rulebook is an easy to read 40 page affair, which comes complete with Mec record sheets and a history of the Battletech universe. The whole Battletech system is based around "Heat Sinks" which each Mec has around their skeleton. They are protected by armour which can absorb differing amounts of damage depending on the weapon used against them.

When Mec's perform an action such as firing a weapon or moving rapidly, it builds up an amount of heat that MUST be dissapated, or it accumulates and causes an overload. The heat is passed through a Mec's heat sinks by expelling the hot air into the atmosphere.

Once a Mec's armour has been destroyed, if it suffers anymore damage in that location it effects the heat sinks directly. This causes the Mecs vast amounts of problems. Your movement and firing abilities are handicapped, then your ammo stands a very good chance of exploding and if you really are unlucky your Mec can totally seize up, leaving you trapped in an immobile metal shell which is just the thing every enemy Mec pilot loves for a spot of target practice.

However, another way to lose heat points – which is not as efficient as using heat sinks – is to steer your mec into a stream, or even better a lake.

The combat system is simplicity itself, and all you need throughout the game is two six sided dice, which are included. Once you have had a couple of battles, using the basic rules you will find that they will become a bit limiting. No need to worry on this front however, as not only does the game contain expert and advanced rules, but there is a phenominal amount of supporting material available separately, which will not only expand the game, but alter it in many different areas.

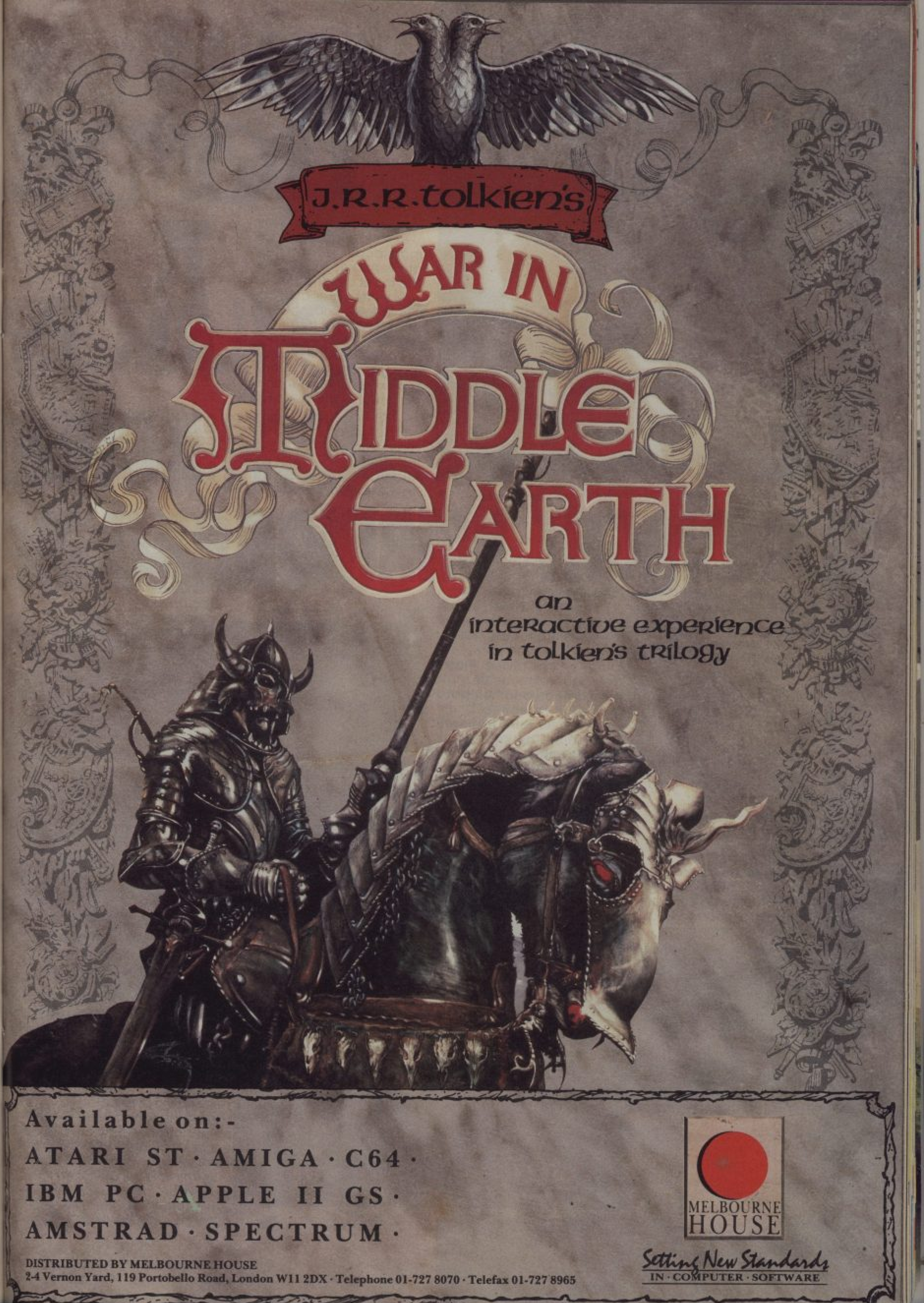
What about when you run out of rockets, machine gun bullets and lasers to fire at the opposition? No problem. Just march up to the enemy Mec and punch him in the head!! The reason you can do this is that full rules are included for Mec versus Mec hand to hand combat, including kicking, punching and jumping to attack.

A nice touch is that you can select the rules that you feel will benefit the game and drop the rules that you find unimportant. This way you can mould the game to suit your needs and play as you see fit. Battletech can be played in quite a few ways, from the simple one on one game to the complex combat of mass Mec mayhem.

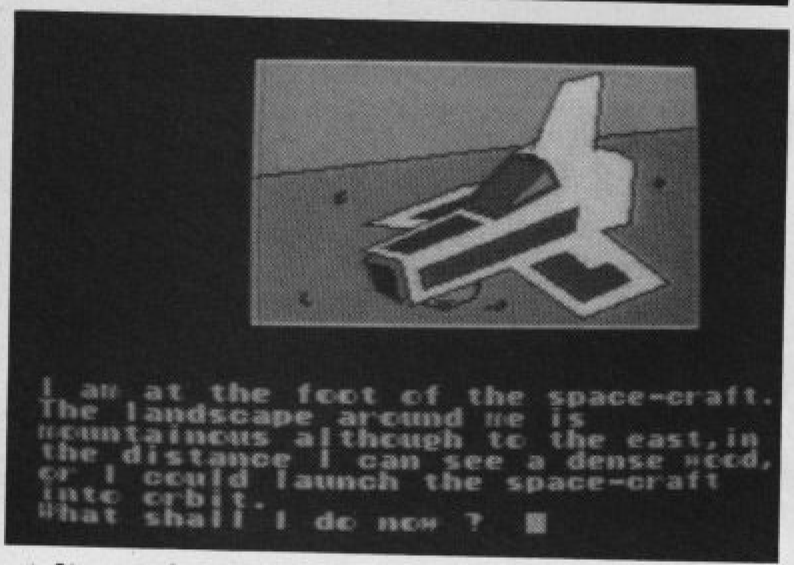
A small selection of Battletech expansion kits available. City Techs depict Mec's battling it out in new terrain, and supplies new Mech tokens, infantry rules and armoured vehicles, Aerotech, which is based around the study and implimentation of combat by aerospace fighters and dropships plus Battletech reinforcements, which is a box full of new Mecs.

Battletech has the potential to last you a long, long time without getting boring in the least. It is the foundation stone of a whole FRP system which can be built upon continually, and the size of the game that you play depends entirely on you – and your financial resources.

► VALUE	70%
► PLAYABILITY	70%
► COMPLEXITY	60%
► BASIC	60%
► ADVANCED	65%
► OVERALL	**85%**


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AGM Home Adv



▲ *Bit pricey for a home made adventure.*

MIDNIGHT WARRIOR

► MACHINE: ATARI ST – £6.95 BY MAIL ORDER ONLY FROM WILSHER SOFTWARE, 120 GELLIGAER STREET, CATHAYS, CARDIFF CF2 4LB.
► REVIEWER: KEITH CAMPBELL.

Here is the first home home grown Atari ST adventure to land on my desk! The STAC has commenced output!

Midnight Warrior is a science fiction adventure. Set in the late 23rd century, the space battle of Midnight has raged between humans and Martians for a hundred years. A warrior, whilst circling a neutral zone in your space ship, you suddenly enter a time trap and get transported to a far off and uncharted galaxy, with no way to get back. You discover it has six planets, and hear that a powerful magician has been wrongly imprisoned on one of them. Now if you could just rescue him, maybe he could use his wizardly powers to get you back to earth.

So there you are with your spacecraft, and a choice of six planets to visit. Among them are Meocron, the 'Third World' planet, so called because the hunger and poverty of its inhabitants, and Virus, the Underworld planet, inhabited by barbarians.

The order in which you choose to visit the planets is entirely up to you, but of course, there may be things on one planet that are required to tackle problems on another. Not a difficult adventure, there's some fairly ordinary problems requiring objects gathered elsehwere. But would a starving beggar preventing you from entering a cave really refuse a hearty meal from the spit-roasted pig you offer him – just because he is a vegetarian? No way.

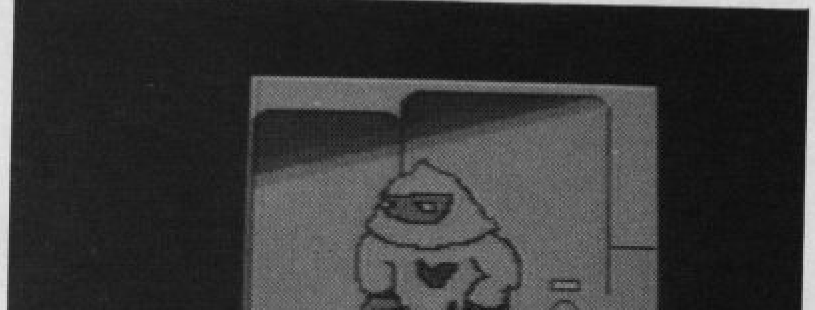
There are graphics for most locations, and they are very quick to display. The local descriptions are well written, if scattered with a few minor spelling errors. (At least these are consistent, although one of my pet hates is the use of 'passed' for 'past'. (Here is a new years resolution for adventure writers – LEARN TO SPELL!)

Nicely presented in a flat plastic box, with a printed instruction leaflet, Midnight Warrior is a light-hearted adventure that should give some reasonable amuseument. But at £6.95, it is too expensive for a home grown adventure, even on the ST.

Around about three or four quid is all it is really worth.

- ► VOCABULARY 61%
- ► ATMOSPHERE 62%
- ► PERSONAL 51%
- ► VALUE 43%

▼ *Dismal tale of a 'Third World' planet.*



► MACHINE: SPECTRUM 48k – £2.50 (INC P&P). FROM COMPASS SOFTWARE, 111 MILL ROAD, COBHOLM, GREAT YARMOUTH NR31 0BB.
► REVIEWER: KEITH CAMPBELL.

Demon From the Darkside is perhaps the best known of Jonathan Lemmon's offerings from Compass Software. It was followed by The Golden Mask, and now The Devil's Hand completes the trilogy.

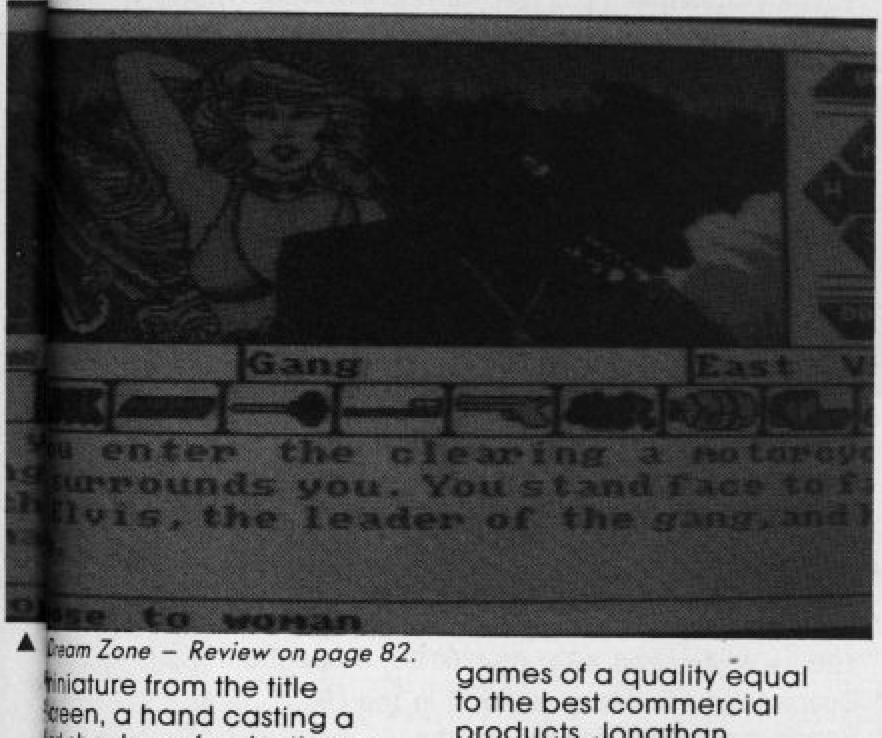
You play the part of Morrack, tracking down Drakon to destroy his soul before he can destroy the great Wizard Zorron.

By a seal wall, beyond which you can see a small island, a Troll has scented you, and is heading your way. Flight is called for, but very soon the Troll catches up with you, and before you know it you are hurtling through the air! Making the most of the distance that now separates you, you find a convenient bolt hole, and meet up with Gruff, a friendly dwarf and sworn enemy of the dreaded troll. So, accompanied by Gruff, you head to the island in pursuance of your quest.

There are about 30 graphics, each occupying a narrow strip at the top of the screen, allowing plenty of room for the text underneath, without too much use of 'any-key to continue'. The pictures are detailed and colourful, and the look of the screen is enchanced by careful use of colour in the text, together with ornamental icons to show exits and to illustrate objects in the Inventory list. A further nice touch is the use of a

eGrown ventures

DEMON FROM THE DARKSIDE



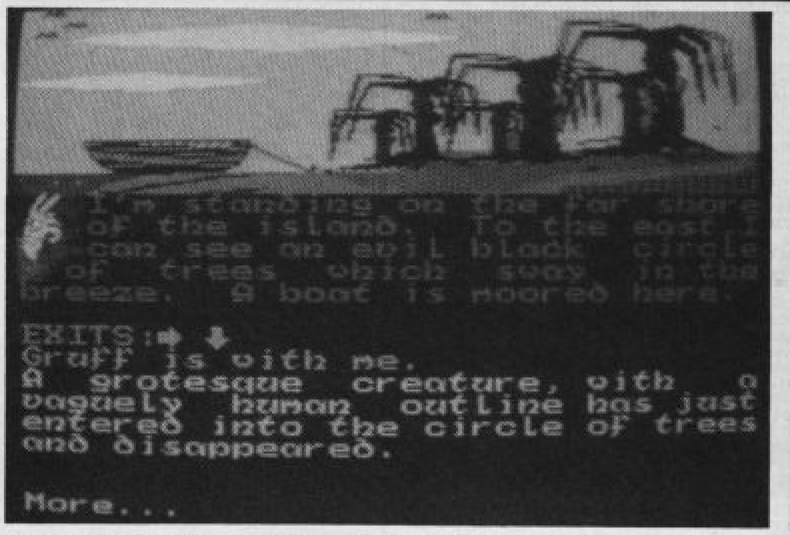
▲ Dream Zone – Review on page 82.

miniature from the title screen, a hand casting a red shadow of a devil, as a preface to descriptions.

The text is immaculately written, and makes the fantasy of interacting with ogres, flowers, orcs and trolls, a magically believable experience. Home grown and Quilled this adventure might be, but it plays a lot better than many tape adventures in a higher price range.

Compass Software, despite offering its adventures by mail order only, has always produced games of a quality equal to the best commercial products. Jonathan Lemmon has come up with another very playable and beautifully presented adventure in The Devil's Hand. There are not many new cassette adventures around these days – so if you own a Spectrum send off for this one, you will not be disappointed! At £2.50 it's a snip!

► VOCABULARY 71%
► ATMOSPHERE 80%
► PERSONAL 81%
► VALUE 90%



▲ *"Mystery thriller with lots of detail."*

DEVIL'S HAND

► MACHINE: SPECTRUM 128k £4.50. AVAILABLE FROM: MARLIN GAMES, 19 BRIAR CLOSE, NAILSEA, BRISTOL BS19 1QG.

Sitting at your junior reporter's desk in the local newspaper office, you are fed up with the constant round of WI meetings, gay vicars, Scout group news, and jumble sales. You yearn to get on to a big story. Opening the envelope in front of you, you discover a letter from Rose Myrtle, of Myrtle Cottage in nearby Puddlecombe. Seems there's been rumours of a strange black beast up on the moors. Yesterday, one of Farmer Lamb's sheep was found mauled, and not by a fox nor a dog, nor Gary Williams either.

This could be your big chance, as the senior reporter is away. Sure enough, your editor tells you to get out after the story, generously thrusting £5 (How much? – Eugene) petty cash in your hand. Soon you arrive at Puddlecombe, where the mysterious sightings have been made, and the investigation begins.

This is a text only adventure, and being a 128K game, there's plenty of it. The events and conversations are described in detail, and the location text is often amusing: "Outside your office the traffic speeds past at a crawl, and your lungs fill with fresh carbon monoxide fumes . . ." Whilst the main challenge of the game is in getting to the bottom of the mystery, even at the outset you have to be methodical in thought and action, in order to be able to reach the scene of the action.

If you like a good old fashioned mystery-thriller with plenty of detail, this biggish adventure by Linda Wright should be just up your street.

► VOCABULARY 73%
► ATMOSPHERE 80%
► PERSONAL 82%
► VALUE 85%

▼ *Home grown quality.*



AGM

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AGM

Well believe it or not the good old PBM column is two years old today! Before I get on with the news and gossip I would just like to thank all the people who have written in over the past two years supporting the column and generally seeking PBM advice. However, this doesn't mean that you can stop! No, the C + VG PBM column is now the longest running PBM column in the whole of the computer press and I need your support to keep it in pole position. So don't delay . . . write today . . .

[redacted]

I regret that I must start my birthday rant with grave news. The Hunting, one of – if not the best-hand moderated PBM around has gone part time. Dave Cooksey – the GM and brains behind the whole game – has managed to con someone into employing him, so he can no longer keep up with the pressure of his PBM work.

He is currently in the process of working out how many players he can cope with, which will ultimately lead to a large reduction in the players participating in the game. A very sad day for PBM as I still receive enquiries about The Hunting.

Dave Cooksey confirmed to me that: "The game will grind to a temporary halt in the new year, while I do some calculations. Hopefully this will be just a short break until I get the The Hunting mark II off the ground. I will keep all the present players up to date and informed as to what has happened to their characters and if they have any refunds to come back."

So where does this leave all the players and potential players who want to play a hand moderated sci-fi game? Well, I have arranged for a playtest of a game called The Survival Of The Fittest to be carried out by PBM Player Of the year Alan Crump, who is a very experienced player and one James Chan, who is a complete novice.

Survival Of the fittest is run by Alien Games, and it appears to be so very similar to the "Hunting", I'm surprised Dave didn't take legal action. The game is set in the 24th century when humankind has been nearly wiped off the face of the earth by a plague called The Red Death.

In fact only a quarter of the world survived by leaving the Earth in a massive space ship. Controlled by organic computers, the spaceship eventually found a planet called Erinyes, which the humans could live on.

A large city was built, which was protected by a giant surrounding wall, and a strange society was born. The richest people in the city – The Class A's, lived in the centre of the city, in total luxury, while other populace – The B's to E's lived around the fingers in a hellish lifestyle.

After 3 years the police all but lost control in the outer sections of the city. Crime was almost unstoppable and it was obvious that it would only be a matter of time before the system of Law and order would break down completely.

As a solution the police introduced the bounty hunter, who buy bringing in known and wanted criminals could earn money, so that they could work up to the much sought after Class A status. Like the Hunting you can play a character who is either a bounty hunter or a criminal, depending on your wishes.

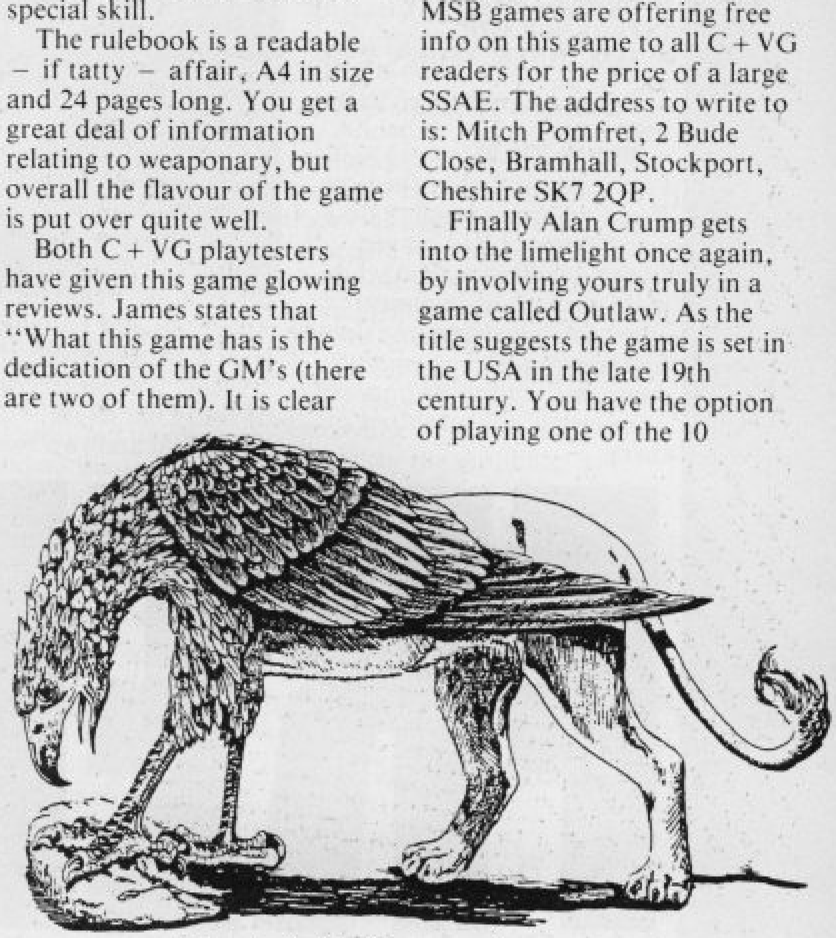
The bounty hunter has to make quick insisive judgements as your life is always on the line. One moments lapse in concentration, one single lack of judgement or one small mistake is all it takes to die. Or worse still, lose your bounty hunters licence!!

Criminals on the other hand start with only 6,000 credits to spend on the black market and uy equipment. Your aim is to uild up a gang, plus noteriety, o that you can retire to the ewers, which have been leaned out and replaced by nuge luxury flats and are Bounty Hunter proof. Well, almost!

You get 285 points to allocate to your characters eight attributes, and depending on how you spend them, you may be allowed to develop a special skill.

The rulebook is a readable – if tatty – affair, A4 in size and 24 pages long. You get a great deal of information relating to weaponary, but overall the flavour of the game is put over quite well.

Both C + VG playtesters have given this game glowing reviews. James states that "What this game has is the dedication of the GM's (there are two of them). It is clear from the start that they both put 24 hours a day, seven days a week into the game. It is well above the average mark as the turns are long, full of detail and always entertaining."



▲ *Survival of the fittest – will you?*

Alan "Mr PBM" Crump echoes James's comments: "I was so impressed with the work and the enthusiasm of the GM that I felt guilty playing for nothing. In fact I felt so guilty that I have even started paying!! The turns are processed on a regular basis and are top class. The GM's provide plenty of original scenario's, which are as interesting as they are dangerous. In fact my character has just woken up in hospital, with a broken arm and several fractured ribs. That will teach me to mess with a shape changer."

If you are interested in joining "Survival of the fittest" contact Simon Marriott, 12 Clewer Avenue, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 3QB with a cheque/PO for £3.50, which is £1.00 off the original asking price of £4.50. Mention C + VG when writing and you will also get a couple of free turns. Further turns are a reasonable £1.00 each!!

I know that C + VG readers like to play unusual PBM games, so how about giving this one a try. "Slam Dunk" is the only PBM version of basket ball that I know of in existence. The small and newly formed MSB games are offering free info on this game to all C + VG readers for the price of a large SSAE. The address to write to is: Mitch Pomfret, 2 Bude Close, Bramhall, Stockport, Cheshire SK7 2QP.

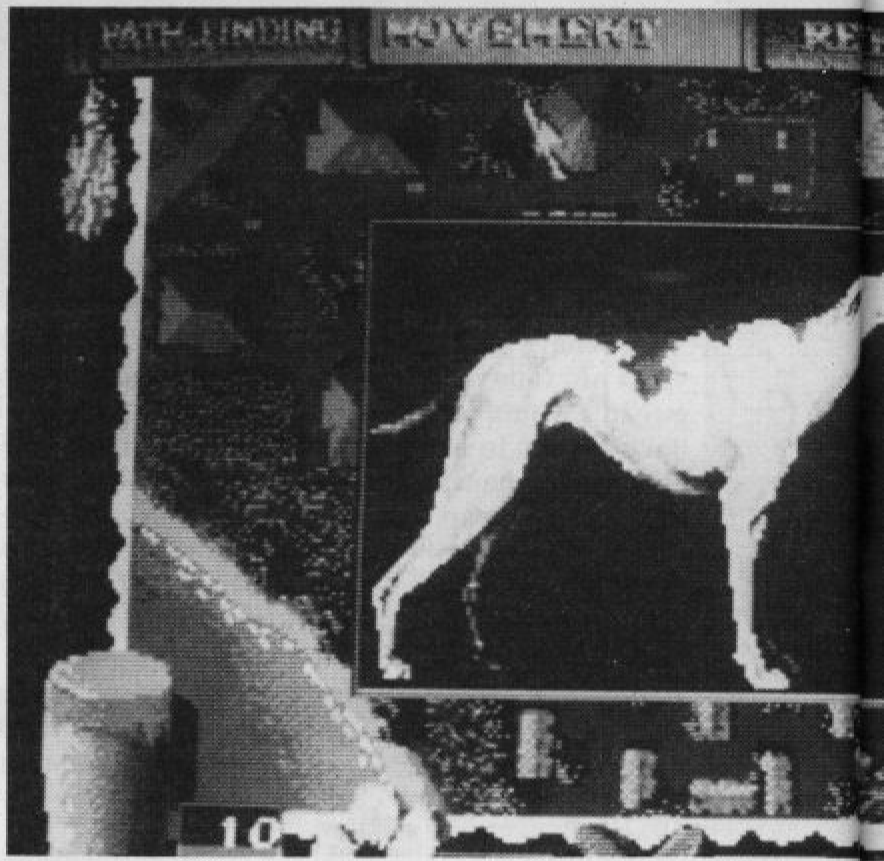
Finally Alan Crump gets into the limelight once again, by involving yours truly in a game called Outlaw. As the title suggests the game is set in the USA in the late 19th century. You have the option of playing one of the 10 different character classes, which range from buffalo hunter, to apache. As soon as your character is created you are equipped from an extensive list of accessories and must then venture out into the rought, tough world of the wild west!!

Start up for the game is £5.00, which includes rulebook, set up, character information sheet, town information and rumour sheet plus a free turn. Further turns are £2.00 each and all cheques and postal orders should be made payable to Warren Saul, c/o 9 Windon Rd, Highworth, Swindon, Wilts SN6 7SL.

That's all for this month, see you next month with some details of some semi professional games that are well worth a look.

Finally if any readers have tried the phone-in game 'Fist' – write in and tell us about it – good, bad, rip-off, or what?

AGM



► **FREEDOM; REBELS IN THE DARKNESS.**
► **PRODUCED BY COKTEL VISION.**
► **PROGRAMMED BY INFERENCE MDO.**
► **MACHINES: AMIGA AND ST.**
► **VERSIONS TESTED: AMIGA AND ST.**
► **PRICE: £19.95.**

I must admit that at the time Freedom arrived on my desk, I was fed up!! I had played sword-wielding macho white male barbarians in almost every role playing game that had been booted up on my computer, and to be honest I was getting sick and tired of them.

FREEDOM

But after reading the introductory bumpf on the Freedom cover, I felt my Role Playing buds tingling once again. The reason? Well, in Freedom you play the part of a Black slave working on a tropical plantation in the 18th century. After years of being used and abused by the tyrannical plantation owner and his staff, you decide that enough is enough: Rebellion is the only option left!!

You will soon find this is no easy task as you have to achieve the co-operation and the support of your downtrodden brothers, as well as the backing of important members of your community such as Witch Doctors and Shamans. Furthermore, the plantation owners have superior resources including troops, who can quell a rebellion instantly – and time is also against you.

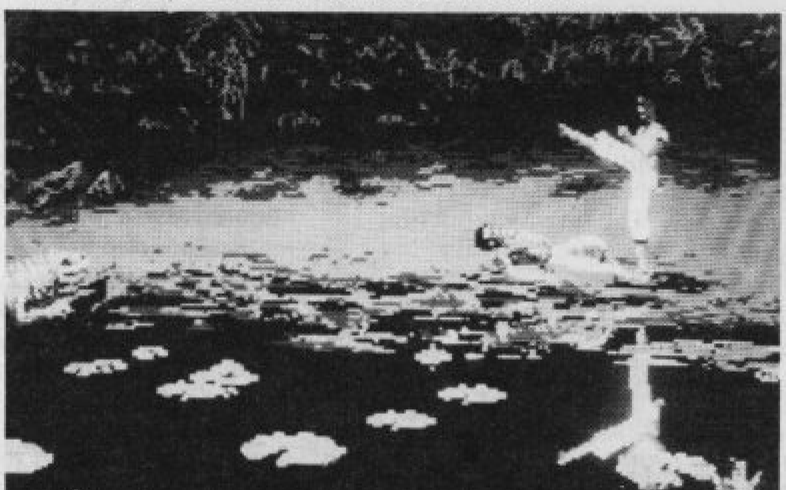
When booting up, you are in for a pleasant surprise, regardless of what computer you own. The music on both the Amiga and ST copies is atmospheric. It captures the feel of the plantation with the booming bass and rythmic beat of a multitude of drums. Of course the Amiga has the better sound, but the music that comes out of the ST is still very listenable.

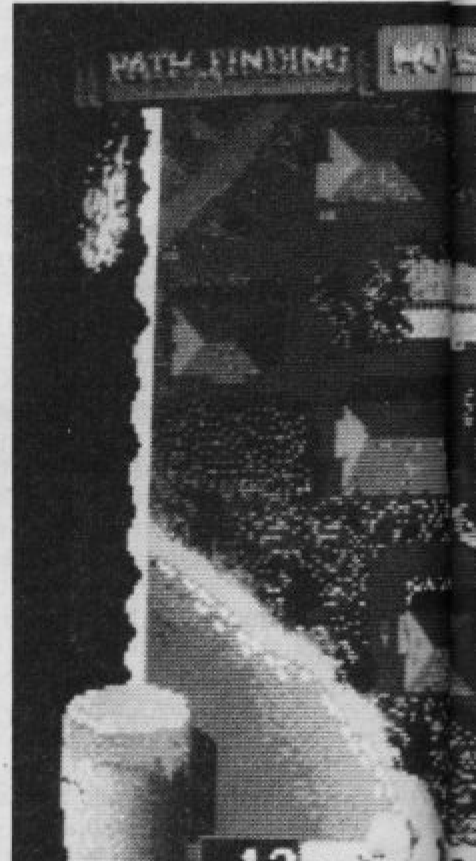
After a few introductory panels appear, giving you the background behind the game you begin play. You have the option of playing the game in three modes; Defiant, Rebelious and Fanatical. Each level is progressively difficult.

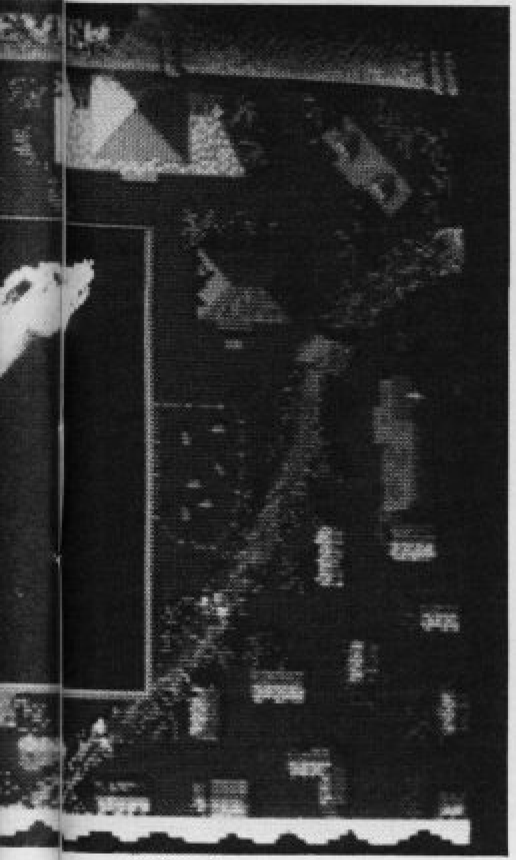
Next, you get to choose one of four characters – two of them men and two women – all of which have different ability ratings. The ratings consist of Charisma, Constitution, Lockpicking, Climbing and Setting Fires. All these ratings – except Charisma and Constitution – help you perform various self explanatory actions. Charisma tells you how much influence you have over inciting your workmates to rebel, while your Constitution score informs you how healthy you are.

Next comes the "composition of the plantation", which tells you who your friends are and who are your enemies. During the game you can recruit – if your charisma is high enough – the Witch-Doctor and the Medicine Man, both of which come in handy. Not only do

▼ *Beat 'em up confrontation with the owners man.*







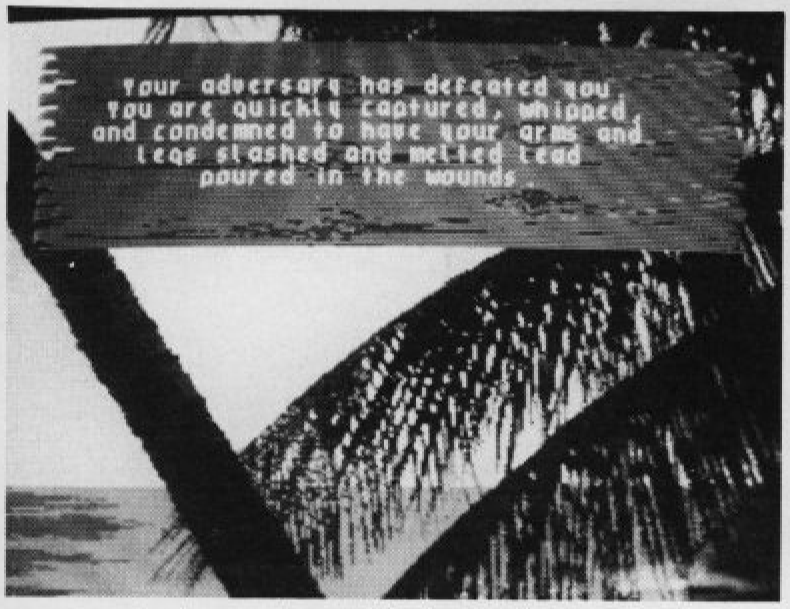
▲ *The dogs pursue your poor slave.*

they neutralise their opposing forces – the monk and the supervisor – but they can also heal any wounds that you sustain or avert attacks buy the plantation owners' dogs.

When this is over, you get a map of the plantation itself. You have three options here, the first is to have a more detailed view of your surroundings, the second is to make a pathway through the plantation, checking out who

▼ *Map of the plantation.*





▲ *Garish colours make text difficult to read.*

lives where – both friendly and hostile – and the third option is to review your position, which is basically checking your score.

There is also a fourth option called Advice, but this cannot be actioned until you have managed to obtain the confidence of the Witch-Doctor or Medicine-Man.

It is when you go for a more detailed view of the surroundings that you get to take part in the so called role playing. To be honest, the role playing element in this game is negligible, as all you do is approach various field and craft workers homes and try to rally them to your side. You don't actually get to speak to them, and all the slaves answers are either in the form of "Yes, I'll join you" or "No, I don't want to be killed."

As for meetings with the enemy, they basically tell you to stop the rebellion now, and you have the opportunity of leaving or confronting them. If you confront them you enter into either hand to hand or cutlass combat. You can use either the mouse, keyboard or joystick to fight your opponent in this Moebius-style arcade combat, and if you win you have the opporunity of killing them or keeping them prisoner. Both options have advantages, but I found killing the less respected members and holding the more valued members captive worked best.

Most of the time you are trying to avoid the dreaded dogs that are set loose to track you down. They do two annoying things; alert the plantation boss that you are on the loose and attack you. The latter option is the most dangerous, as the dogs attack you in another arcade sequence that is quite hard to master.

If you end up in a sugar or vegetable field you have the option of setting it alight or leaving. Dependent on the time, your following and awareness of the enemy, this can be a good or bad thing. If you burn too many fields too quickly the troups will be called in and the game will finish immediately. However, if you don't do anything, you won't be able to recruit more followers.

After playing Freedom for several lengthy sessions, I was disappointed. The role playing content is minimal to say the least, the figure that represent your character is miniscule and there is much to much instant death for my liking.

Added to this, some of the colours used are so vivid that when it comes to reading various parts of the text, they become unreadable. For example, could you read pink and green text on a yellow background!!

I tried to like this game, as the concept, music and storyline were all good, however the graphics, Role Playing element and actual game design are sadly lacking, so, with some regret, I reached over to my role playing pile for another game. And what a surprise, it's another sword-weilding macho white male barbarian game. Oh well!

ST

► ROLE PLAYING	40%
► SOUND	80%
► GRAPHICS	60%
► PLAYABILITY	50%
► COMPLEXITY	62%
► DESIGN	51%
► **OVERALL**	**52%**

AMIGA

► ROLE PLAYING	40%
► SOUND	85%
► GRAPHICS	82%
► PLAYABILITY	52%
► COMPLEXITY	62%
► DESIGN	51%
► **OVERALL**	**54%**

UPDATE . . .

Freedom is available now for ST, Amiga and PC. No 8-bit versions are planned.

Cocktel Vision's move into computer role playing games is typical of a number of French software companies. Role playing games are really starting to shift there and throughout the rest of Europe. Expect to see lots more games throughout the year. AGM will keep you posted.

FREE FIREBI GAME



Silverbird are so confident of the quality of their budget games for '89 that they have decided to prove to C + VG readers just how good they can be.

Brainstorm is an exclusive free sample. An arcade strategy game that will tax your gaming skills and brain power to the limits. We also publish here the original packaging for you to cut out and keep. Happy new year readers. A free game to you from C + VG and Silverbird.

C + VG has a hand held Mastermind computer to give away to the best strategy guide to Brainstorm to reach this office by Feb 16th. Send your entry to C + VG Brainstorm Compo, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Name..

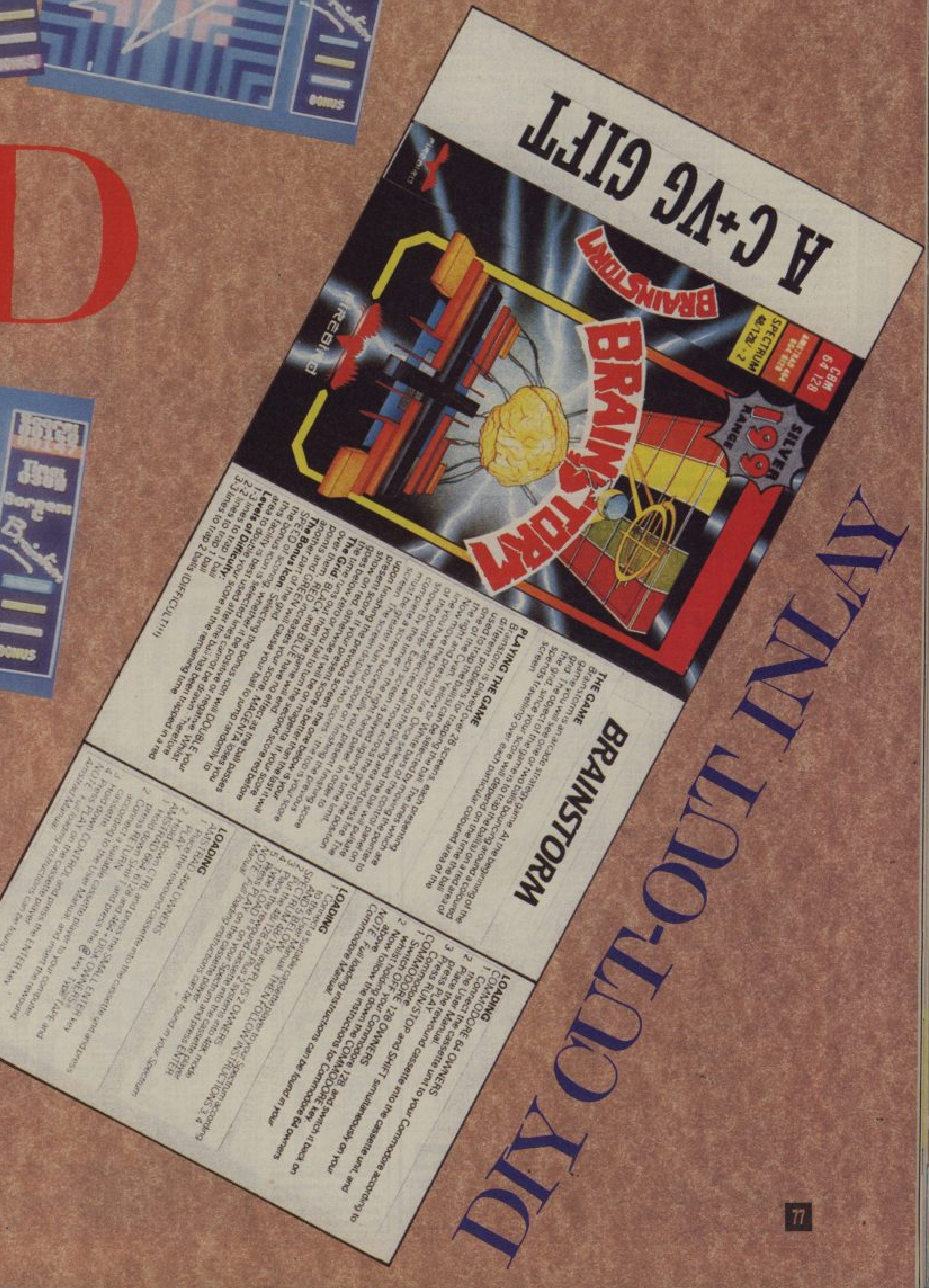
Address..

RD









DIY CUT-OUT INLAY

AGM Helpline

Giving adventure clues has its hazards, for whilst a clue may be perfectly sound in itself, it may give the appearance of being about as useful as a bunch of bananas when under attack by an assailant with a pointed stick!

A case in point seems to have been my recent clue on how to get out of the basement kitchen in Rigel's Revenge. Mik Brookes wrote from Tipton, saying that no matter what he typed in along the lines of the clue (which is repeated in this months clues section) he still got the reply: "Harper could still not squeeze through the bars" at the end of it all. What I had omitted to mention in the clue, was that before Harper goes east and down to enter thebasement, he must drop everything he is carrying, including whatever he is wearing, except this nightsights. Then he will be able to escape through the barred window, providing he is only carrying and not wearing the medikit which he finds inside.

Darren Sellwood reckons that any doubts Magnetic Scrolls might have about their regular fans not liking Corruption, can be forgotten – it even beats his previous favourite, Guild Of Thieves. But Darren, like everyone else, is not without problems! He can't find the secret room, he keeps getting shot by the fraud squad officer in the Police Station, the tramp seems intent on knifing him, his car keeps blowing up, and he is lost for words when dining with his wife! (Is it the price of what she orders, or can't you get a word in edgeways, Darren?) Other than that, Darren is getting along fine!

A band of six adventurers, all members of the Knokke Computer Club based in Knokke-Heist, are desperately trying to complete Guild Of Thieves. They would like to correspond with anyone who can help. So if you think you can, and would like to forge a link with this Belgian computer club, then write to Peter Wulleman, Tulpenlaan 4, 8300 Knokke-Heist, Belgium.

Have you been having any problems with adventures from Alternative Software? Paul Hardy, a C-64 owner from Sheffield has. He's had two copies of Cricket Crazy (part 1 wouldn't load on either), two Colour Of Magics (neither will save or ramsave), one Football Frenzy (side 2 will not load) and one Wiz Biz (side 1 will not load). What's going on Alternative?

M. Amin of Cardiff wants to sell his C-64 and buy an Amiga! But he won't part with it until he's completed two adventures which are currently baffling him – a task with which I was unable to help him. He's sitting in an empty room in the Dark Fortress in Wolfman, not knowing what on earth to do, and he's searching for wood in Frankenstein.

Missing the blindingly obvious is what Richard Cooke of Guiseley, Leeds, is sure he is doing! Having received the onyx key from Kylie, he cannot find a way into Mangar's domain, in Bard's Tale. And as for Peter Wright of Nuneaton, he can't even get hold of the key, so what chance does he stand!

It never ceases to amaze me how long-lived are even the cheapest of cheapo budget adventures! After I had though them to be dead, all of a sudden there's a re-emergence of Seabase Delta, and even older, The Helm. And an old favourite from Scott makes a welcome comeback too – The Hulk. So look through the clues if you, too, are stuck in one of these golden oldies!

How do you get upstairs in a police station when somebody keeps throwing you back down? And how do you stop yourself being shot by a villain in Chinatown? These are two questions from Stuart Freeston, who is stuck in the Big Sleeze.

And finally, here's some news for Commodore owners who like their help undiluted! It comes in the form of a new Commodore specific adventure fanzine, Advenfoe International, produced by Gordon Kirkham. Advenfoe is half A-4 size and clearly printed, consisting of about 30 pages, 24 of which contain command-by-command solutions to up to 20 adventures. Issue two, for example, included Hampstead, Urban Upstart, Castle Of Terror, and The Pawn. Advenfoe costs £3.20 per issue, but is available to any C+VG reader on subscription, at £24.00 for 12 issues. The offer closes on 16 February, and anyone subscribing should mention C+VG.

And Gordon is offering C+CVG readers the chance of a free copy! Send a large SAE, and the first 25 he draws out of a hat on the 16th Feb (whether ordering a subscription or not) will receive a free copy of Avenfoe. Those who are unlucky, will instead get a free solution to The Pawn. The address is: Gordon Kirkham, 23 Hope Street, Ashton-Under-Lyne, Tameside, OL6 9SN

Clues

ADVENTURE CLUES

SEABASE DELTA:
Fire the speargun to fill the pen!

THE HELM:
Pick the castle lock with the needle.

HULK:
Press the button and bite yourself before venturing outside!

EUREKA (Wartime Germany):
Make the secretary in the bunker faint with a cockroach.

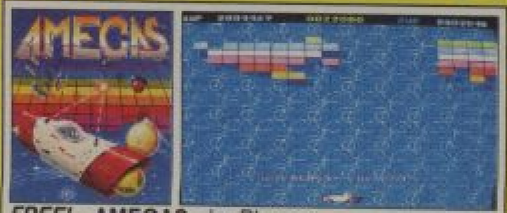
QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN EGGCUP:
To pass the treasure room guard, free the bird.

CORRUPTION:
Use your card to get into Bill's office, and break open the drawer with the screwdriver.

RIGEL'S REVENGE:
To escape the basement – unabridged version!

Wear only nightsights and drop everything before going east and down to the basement. Get and wear the medikit, and climb on the sink. Pull bar, pull bar hard, then press the green button followed by the red button (on the medikit). Bend bar up, remove medikit, and OUT will take you back to where you dropped your possessions.

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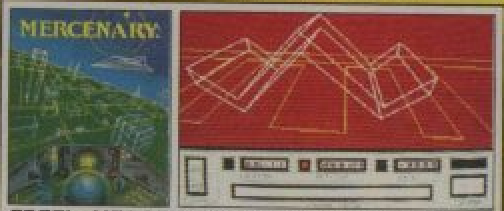
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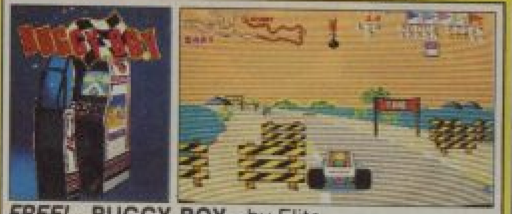
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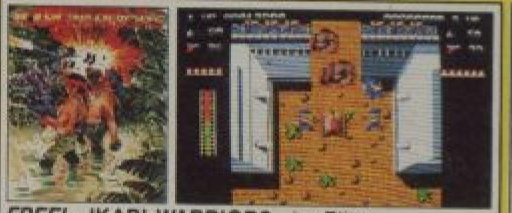
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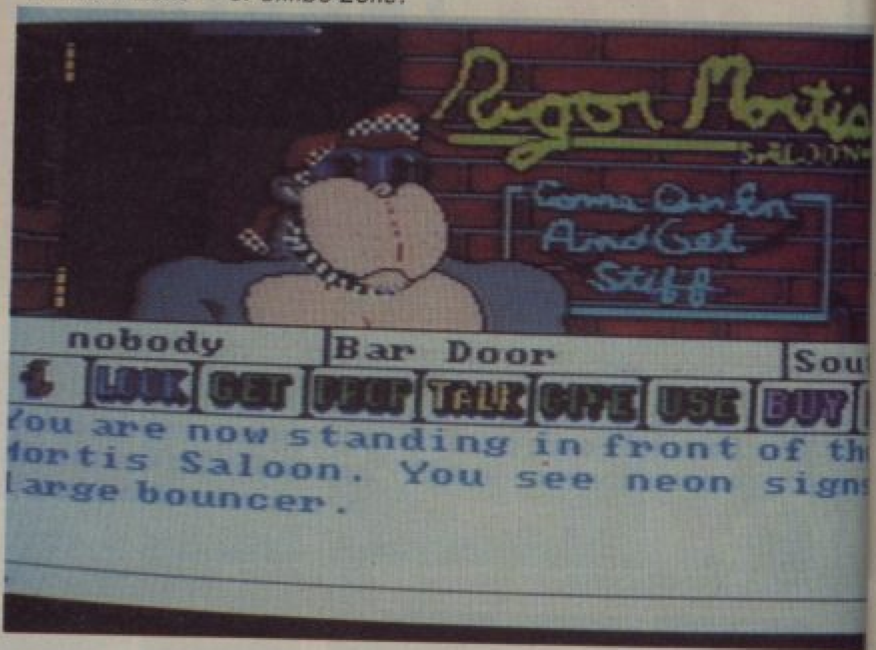
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Do you already own a computer
If so, which one do you own? ....

▼ *Dream Zone – or Bimbo Zone?*



DREAM ZONE

► LEISURESOFT/BAUDVILLE.
► ATARI ST; AMIGA; IBM PC; £24.99.
► VERSION REVIEWED: AMIGA.
► REVIEWER: KEITH CAMPBELL.

Your dreams have been troubled of late, and you have not been getting a lot of sleep. The rest of the family have been troubled too, being woken by your screams, and by your restless pacing around the house at night. So you go along to see a shrink, Professor Fraud, who sticks probes all over you, and feeds you a dose of medicine. He tells you to go home and sleep, and the beast that lurks within your mind will be exorcised.

As soon as you nod off you find yourself on a path suspended in space, winding through stars and planets from your bedroom door at one end, to a locked gate at the other. Beyond the gate lies a strange city, where bureaucracy rules supreme. The first thing to strike you is the imposing Department Of Information building, whose sole purpose seems to be to authorise access to the Rigor Mortis Bar.

Despite it's welcoming slogan – 'Come in and get stiff' – there's no way past Bonzo the bouncer unless you have an ID card. As luck would have it, a dodgy character lurking in a dark alley, has a jacket lined with ID cards. "Wanna buy one?" he asks. Of course you do, but there is one slight snag – you need form 69b – 12c from the DOI before he can sell you one.

The clerk on the duty at the DOI reception helpfully informs you that these forms are available in room N3L-D. Once you get the hang of operating the lift, and finding your way around the 120-room building, it is with relief that you enter N3L-D. Your hopes are short-lived – you are referred to officer S3R-D in room N4R-E, only to be told he's not there, and to ask in room N2L-D. Here, you are informed that he's in room S3-D, and so on and so on.

Just as you think you are winning, these piggy-faced office bureaucrats become unco-operative, to the point that you are forced to shoot one in order to get hold of one of the essential forms. His dying words tell you urgently that you MUST get form 22Z-131 from S4L-B and take it to room S2R-A for a receipt, or you'll never get out of the building.

Returning back up this form trail is far more confusing than the outward journey, and despite keeping a list of rooms and forms I had to think very carefully at each move.

And at long last, I found myself inside the Rigor Mortis Bar, where a very shapely barmaid with spray-on jeans was offering free drinks.

After supping your fill trail leads to an amusement park complete with big-top, freak show, and airship rides, whilst another main route takes the dreamer to an underwater cave, and oriental palace.

Not all the problems in Dream Zone are easily solved, and some are not easily found, either. So despite referring to the map provided which contains clue-like suggestions on what to do in many locations, and despite opening the sealed 'hints for wimps' envelope, I was unable to reach one whole area of the city.

Dream Zone is a graphics adventure, with catchy theme music whose moods suits the occasions. Whilst all commands can be entered as text from the keyboard, many can alternatively be issued by using the mouse and icons. All movement is available from icon. However, the keyboard must be used occasionally to supplement icon commands, and the mouse is needed to 'find' objects in the picture, so a mixture of both is always necessary.

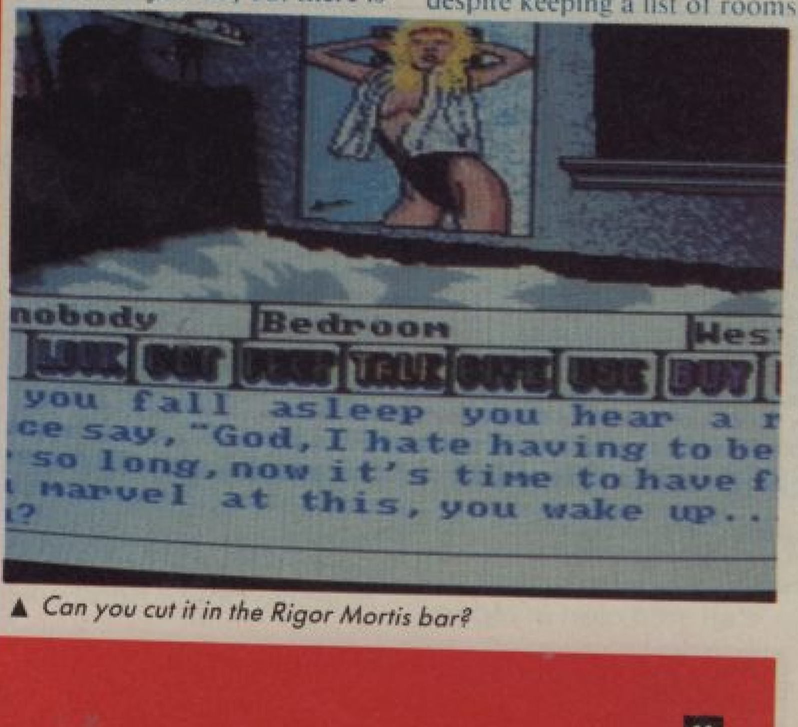
Not all locations are shown on the map, and one feature noticeably missing from the game play is a list of exits from each location.

SAVE, LOAD, QUIT, NEW GAME, and a few other functions are accessed via the menu bar, and up to ten saved positions are provided for on the game disk itself, which must be used for this function. This eliminates tiresome disk changing.

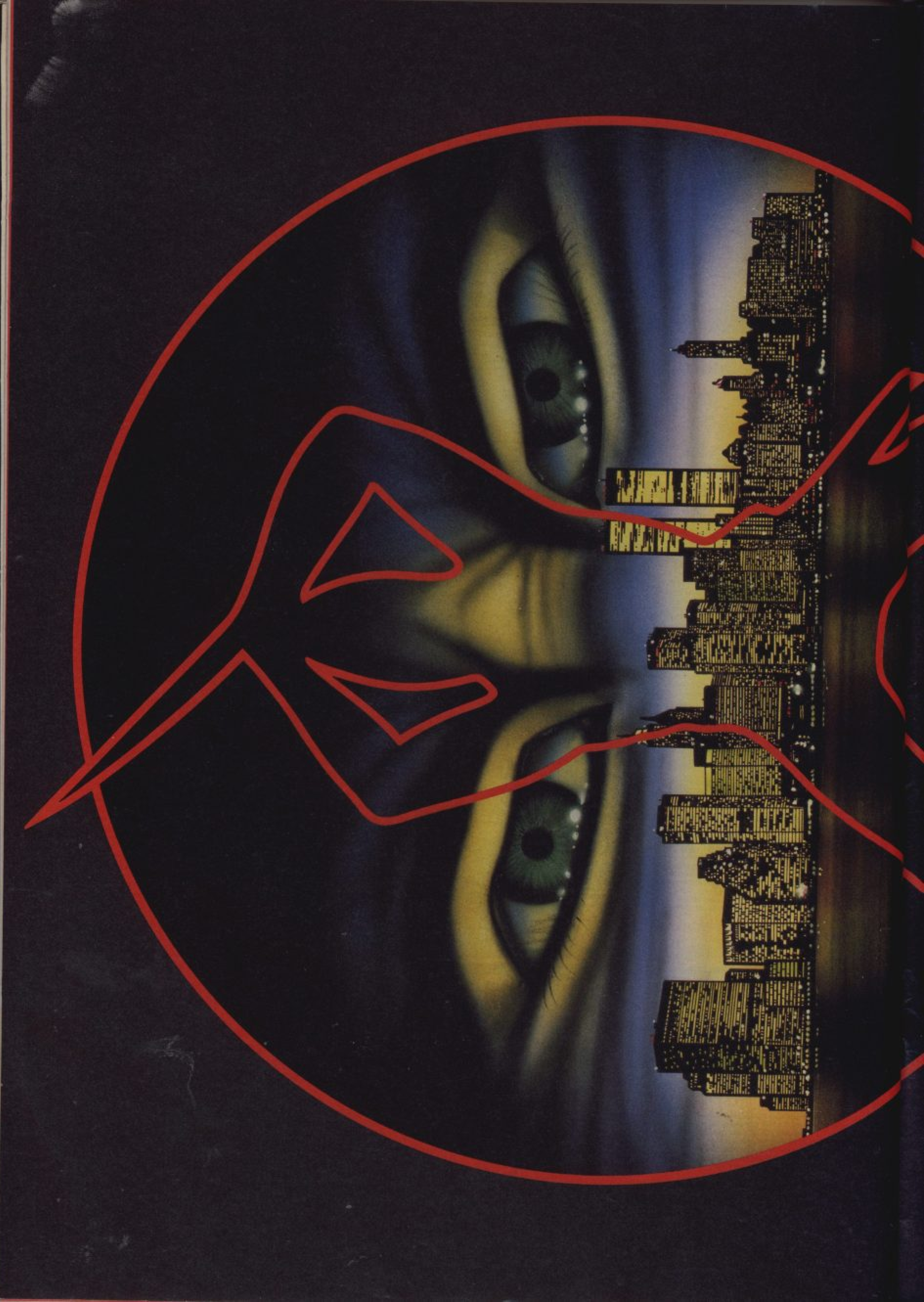
The graphics are brilliant, although at the outset, the player might be forgiven for thinking otherwise! Starting off in your bedroom, the picture is a digitised black and white photo. Progressing to the bathroom, the toilet and bog roll can also be seen in monochromatic photographic detail! However, once your dream starts, the misty photo of your room becomes sharply defined and filled with colour. There is a colour picture for every location that follows. The pictures are attractive, full of interest, and yield an occasional clue.

Every now and then, just when adventures seem to have settled down into a bit of a rut, along comes something completely new and off-beat, like a breath of fresh air. Dream Zone, written by American teenagers Andy Gavin and Jason Rubin, is one of those games, and there hasn't been anything like it since Tass Times. Amusing and satirical, it will have you trapped in its fantasy world for hours at a time! More, please, Baudville!

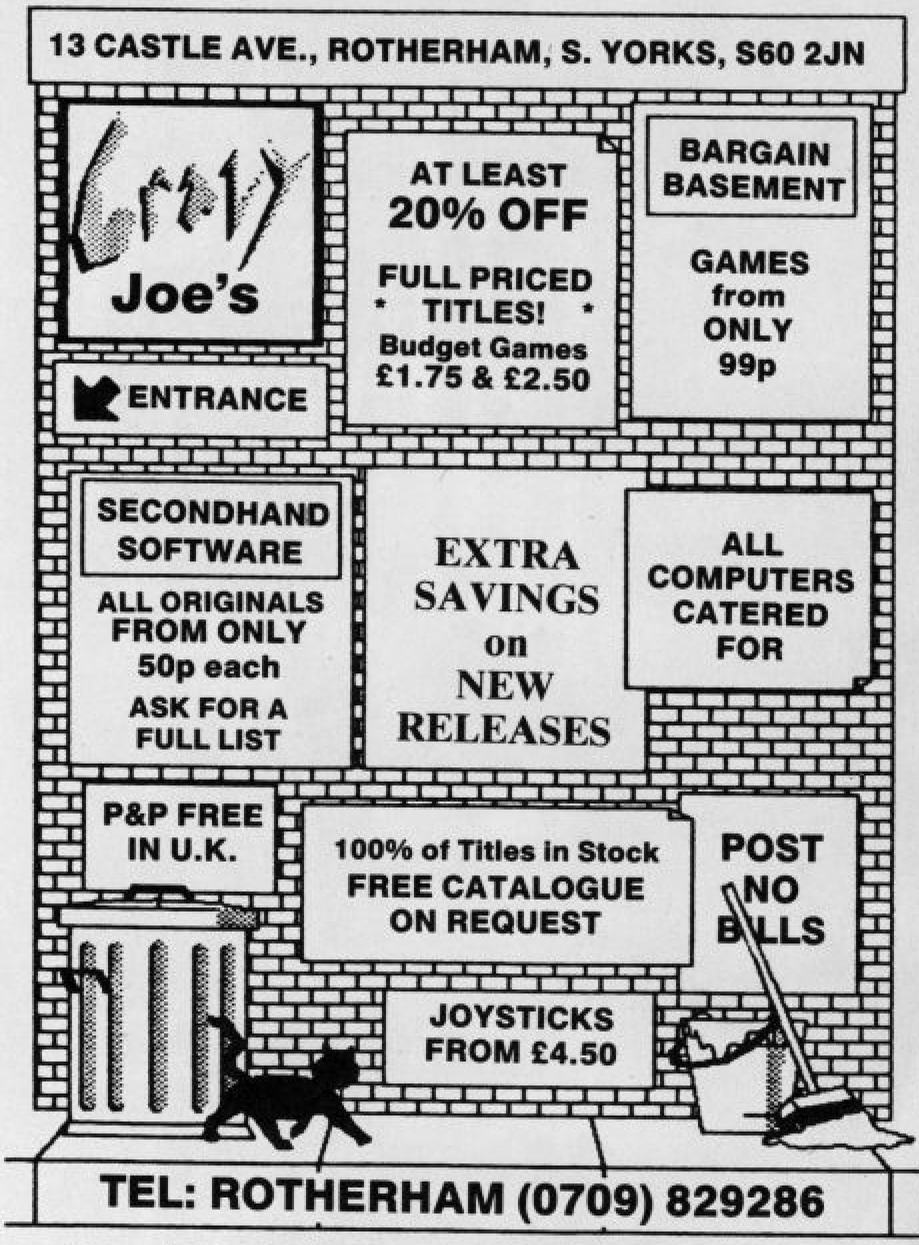
► VOCABULARY	80%
► ATMOSPHERE	81%
► PERSONAL	89%
► VALUE	88%



▲ *Can you cut it in the Rigor Mortis bar?*




LAST
NINJA
2
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growing daily.

Please, I'm fed up with entering my newsagents and seeing specialist magazines for every other machine (even the prehistoric Spectrum). You've managed to produce a superb mag for the 16-bit owners with The One – so let's have one for the consoles.

Damon Show,
Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex.

EDITOR'S REPLY: The Mean Machines section is expanding . . . but watch out for something rather special coming to you in the not-too-distant future. I won't say any more, other than all you console owners will love it!!

Dear C+VG

● I've noticed a remarkable resemblance between Eugene Lacey and darts player Jockey Wilson. Could you print pictures of the two so other readers can see the similarity.

Hamish Patel, Liverpool.

EDITOR'S REPLY: Do I really have to? Oh, all right then – and he's not my brother – he's just heavy.

Dear C+VG

● Just what the hell is all the fuss about this ugly looking shoe box called the Nintendo? Sega I can take, that's cool. But the Nintendo I wouldn't take if they were given away. I own an ST, and whilst striding through Boots I saw a Nintendo displaying Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!! and Top Gun (to name but a few). So being a sort of a lad, I had a go. I wish to God I hadn't. It diminished what little respect I originally had for it. The games make 8-bit look, feel and sound like the movies.

If that's Nintendo, keep it for the Japs and Yanks. Nintendos are about as exciting as watching paint dry, and about as much use as a chocolate kettle.

How the hell the British users can like it is anyone's guess. Maybe the few who possess one are the victims of cruel parents. Do yourselves a favour and give it to a good home – your coal fire, and look at ST games for class.

Kenneth Jackson, Edinburgh.

EDITOR'S REPLY: What a blinkered, bigotted, narrow-minded nit you are. Anyone with half a brain realises that the Nintendo is an excellent games machine, and titles like *Super Mario Bros* still put the majority of 16-bit games to shame. And some of the new stuff being released in Japan and America are absolutely superb – Vulcan Venture and Star Force both outclass all ST shoot 'em ups! Now, I'm not saying the Nintendo is better than the ST, but some of the games are certainly superior to anything currently available. So wise up and open your eyes.

Dear C+VG

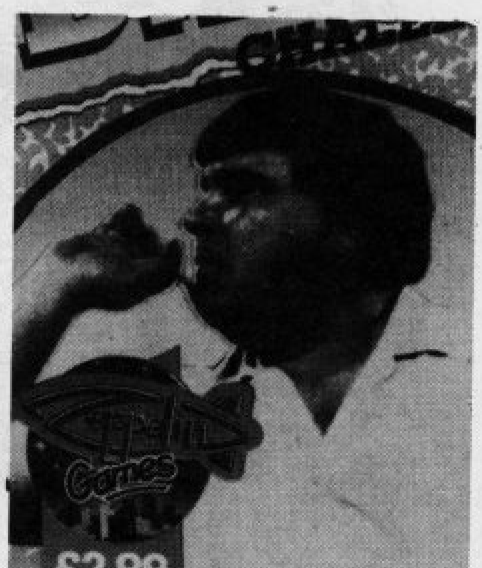
● On the ad for next month's C+VG you said there's a free tape. Okay, I hear you cry. Ah, but I can safely bet that there won't be an Amstrad program on the tape. I'm getting very close to cancelling my C+VG and ordering an Amstrad publication. So please put a bit more Amstrad in the mag.

Jos Waters, Co. Durham.

EDITOR'S REPLY: Oh dear. I think you've just lost your safe bet. There's an Amstrad game dangling from this very cover . . .



Is that Jockey Wilson? ▲



▲ *Or is it Eugene Lacey?*





The New Year has kicked off witha veritable goodie-bag of letters, full of the usual moans, groans, compliments and complaints. If you have more of the same, and don't feel scared to write in, send your letter to: Mailbag, C+VG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. And if you need any more persuading, there's a stonking good C+VG T-shirt on offer to the sender of the most interesting and original letter of the month.

Dear C+VG

● Your mag would probably be the best around, except for the following points: 1. Julian Rignall should get his facts right. In the Muncher review, he said, "the Spectrum had slightly better sprites than the C64." As anyone who knows anything about computers would know, the Speccy has NO sprites! Only UDG's!. 2. JR again! This time in the Play Masters section, he wrote that John Maguire found the cheat in Revenge of Doh. (typing CHEETAH in the highscore table). Several months ago that was printed in COMMODORE USER. Also the Bionic commando bug was printed in ZZAP!64 several months ago. 3. (Not a dig at JR this time). This magazine is supposed to be a computer mag, not a film mag OR a games console mag! They are not computers, by any stretch of the imagination. 4. In the last ish', why were some C64 ratings missed out.

John-Lee Langford, Dudley, W. Mids.

EDITOR'S REPLY: First of all, haven't you heard of sprite emulation? Obviously not. Secondly, you might have seen them in other mags, but the majority of our readers won't have. And you'll often see the same tips appear in other mags after they've been printed in C+VG – readers send tips unaware that they've already been seen! Third, the title is Computer and Video games – not Computer Games. We cover all aspects of computer and video gaming, as well as anything we think you readers find interesting. As it happens, the Big Screen section is very popular – if you don't like it, don't read it. It's only two pages.

● Well done C+VG, well done for taking absolutely no notice of your readers. I refer to your and highly praised (by you) section AGM. When I look back at the old letters I see hundreds of letters saying 'please make the PBM section bigger' 'please increase the size of the FRP section' and lastly 'a few more adventure reviews wouldn't go a miss', so good old C+VG what do they do, yep, they make a completely new section called AGM, that means that they squash all of the above into 7 pages. Whereas usually we would get at least 8-9 pages worth, not only that but the titles take up about ½ the page. The PBM page has disappeared, please bring it back, I'm an avid PBM'er (I even run one at my own school called 'SALTFIRE') and look forward to this piece on PBM all week, please.

Sorry about starting on a bad note, but it had to be said, anyway the rest of the magazine is perfect. Now for the question. On the game The President is Missing what are the code numbers to get into the files, I can't get in and from what your review said and what the rulebook says I think that there is something wrong with my game. I know that you have a tendency to not answer questions but please answer this as I am on the verge of sticking the whole computer and game up someones *?!*.

Daniel Todd, Peterborough.

EDITOR'S REPLY: Flip me! There's no pleasing some people. You say you'd normally get eight or nine pages worth of adventure, FRP and PBM, and nows it's squashed into seven pages. Rubbish! AGM is much larger than all the previous sections combined – this month we have 14 pages devoted to your favourite subjects, and it looks as though it could be getting even bigger in the future. So stop complaining.

Dear C+VG

As I read your magazine I feel more and more frustrated as the Mean Machines section only covers six or seven pages. I understand you can't get rid of all your other items just for console owners, so let me suggest something else. Get your heads together at EMAP and come up with a separate magazine for Sega, Nintendo and PC Engine owners.

I realise that console games are difficult to come by for review, but the magazine need not be all games reviews. Highscores, tips, letters, features, round-ups on other computers and interesting subjects could all be included.

Come on – it makes sense. 100,000 consoles are owned in Britain, and the number is



Golden

JOYSTICK AWARDS 88

It's that Golden Joystick time of year again. Voting is now open for Europe's most prestigious computer game awards. Golden Joysticks is entering its sixth proud year. In the time we have been running the awards each year has seen a large growth in the number of votes cast by you – the C+VG readers. It's the reader poll that makes our awards the special ones. No arbitrary panels, no reviewers sticking their noses in. The games that win our prizes are the ones you vote for. Plain and simple.

This year we are expanding the awards by inviting our sister magazines in the Emap group (our publishers) to extend the voting to their readers. Voting forms will also be appearing in Sinclair User, Commodore User and The One.

The game categories are as follows: Software House of the Year, Game of the Year, Adventure of the Year, Arcade Game of the Year, Strategy Game of the Year, Role Playing Game of the Year, Programmer of the Year, Best Original Game, Best Coin-op Conversion, Best Graphics (16 bit), Best Graphics (8 bit), Best Soundtrack (16 bit), Best Soundtrack (8 bit), Best Simulation.

In addition there are four machine specific awards sponsored by individual magaiznes. These are the C+VG Console Game of the Year, the Commodore User Amiga Game of the Year, the Sinclair User Spectrum Game of the Year, and The One Atari ST Game of the Year.

Get your votes in now. We have ten C+VG 'Stonking Good Read' T Shirts to give away to ten lucky voters who are drawn out of our mail bag. Vote now.

Best Coin-op Conversion.......................................
Runner-Up.......................................
Software House of the Year.......................................
Runner-Up.......................................
Arcade Game of the Year.......................................
Runner-Up.......................................
Best Adventure Game.......................................
Runner-Up.......................................
Best Original Game.......................................
Runner-Up.......................................
Best Graphics (8-bit).......................................
Runner-Up.......................................
Best Graphics (16-bit).......................................
Runner-Up.......................................
Best Soundtrack (8-bit).......................................
Runner-Up.......................................
Best Soundtrack (16-bit).......................................
Runner-Up.......................................
Programmer of the Year.......................................
Runner-Up.......................................
Best Role Playing Game.......................................
Runner-Up.......................................
Strategy Game of the Year.......................................
Runner-Up.......................................
Best Simulation.......................................
Runner-Up.......................................
Game of the Year.......................................
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FEBRUARY ISSUE ON SALE JANUARY 28TH

PlayMasters

Happy New Year! Hope you haven't broken your resolutions yet. Fatty Williams already has, but you can read all about that in Fax. This is Playmasters, the hints and tips section. This month, among the usual assortment of POKEs and cheats, is a mega R-Type map and tips to help you blast the evil Bydo empire. Hope you find it useful. If you have any cheats, maps or whatever, send in your stuff to Playmasters, C + VG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Don't forget there's a mega software package on offer for the month's best tips.



COMMANDO (Encore)
This is a brilliant Spectrum shoot 'em up, and still a personal fave. If you find the going a little tough, try out this listing from the Tefal Men.

```
 20 REM
    MFI POKE 60692,201
    MF1 POKE 27654,0
    GRENADES
    lives
 30 CLEAR 40000
 40 LOAD ""CODE
 50 POKE 65483,172
 60 POKE 65484,84
 70 FOR f = 65030 TO
    65041
 80 READ a: POKE f,a
 90 NEXT f
100 DATA
    62,201,50,20,237,175
110 DATA
    50,6,108,195,30,100
120 RANDOMIZE USR
    55485
```

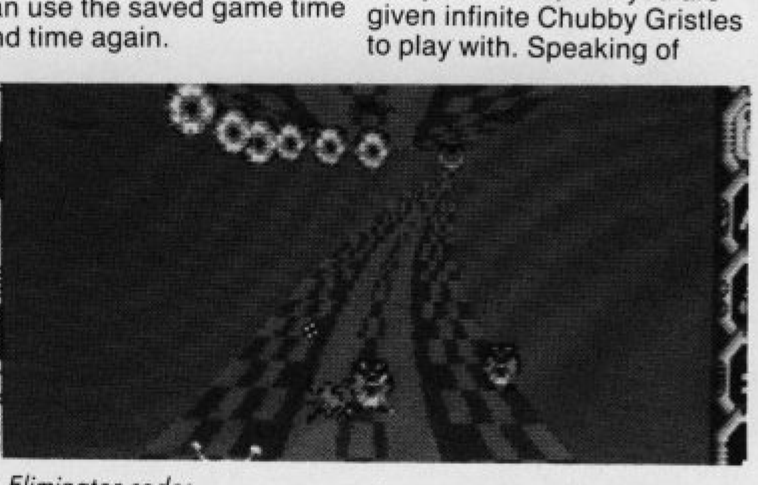
BOMBJACK (Encore)
Another listing from those mysterious Tefal Men, and again for the Spectrum. Like the listing above, just type it in, SAVE it (so you don't have to do it again) and RUN it. Plop the game tape into the cassette and press play and a million, billion jacks are yours for the playing and killing.

```
  5 REM MF1 POKE
    49984,0
 10 CLEAR 29877
 20 LOAD ""CODE
 30 POKE 65533,1
 40 POKE 65534,91
 50 FOR f = 23297 TO
    23305
 60 READ a
 70 POKE f,a
 80 NEXT f
 90 DATA 175,50,64,195
100 DATA 195,75,193
110 RANDOMIZE USR
    65465
```

BAAL (Psyclapse)
This tip was rushed in by Alan Hughes of Milton Keynes. He says that the game is difficult with only five warriors (I agree with that). So, to remedy the situation build up a stock of extra lives (a new warrior is awarded every 5,000 points) by going to location 08-49 on the first level, where there's a handing saving/refuelling point. There are plenty of green snake-like creatures around, so you can kill them, building up points and lives in the process, and return to the point to refuel. It's a bit tedious, but if you do this once and save your position, you can use the saved game time and time again.



▲ *Ninja II – the last bit.*


▲ *Eliminator codes.*

LAST NINJA II (System 3)
Further to the map and tips printed a couple of issues back, here's how to do the final scene – courtesy of Frank Tough of Wood Side, Aberdeen.

On the final battle level, accessed when you've opened the safe and taken out the spirit of Kunitoki, he runs on-screen and proceeds to attack the Ninja. At this pint, turn and beat a hasty retreat to the previous screen. Re-enter and lob a couple of shuriken stars in his general direction and kill him – but make sure he dies in the pentagram. Now rush around all the candles and light each one. Kunitoki explodes and you can put the spirit back in the safe to get the congratulations screen. Rah! Rah! Rah!

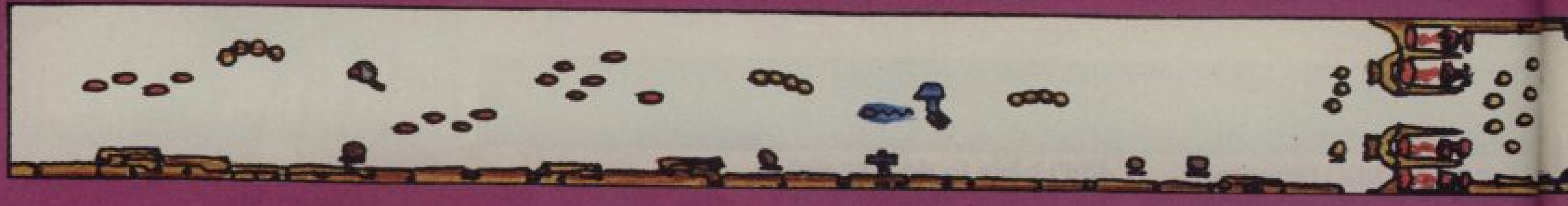
CHUBBY GRISTLE (Grand Slam)
Kingsley Hyam of South Benfleet discovered that on the Amiga version of this classic load of codswallop, if you type BUUURRP on the title screen, you get a lovely sampled belch, and you are given infinite Chubby Gristles to play with. Speaking of horrible fat people, I've got a brilliant fat joke for you – Garry Williams! Har! Har!

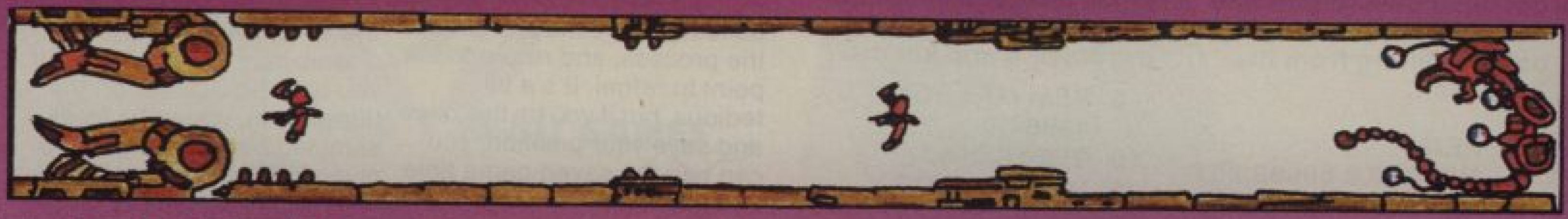
ELIMINATOR (Hewson)
Kingley Hyam has the level codes for the ST version of this brilliant race game – just press HELP and then enter the relevant code to go to the required level.

2	AMOEBA
3	BLOOOP
4	CHEEKI
5	DOINOK
6	ENIGMA
7	FLIPME
8	GEEGEE
9	HANDEL
10	ICICLE
11	JAMMIN
12	KIKONG
13	LAPDOG
14	MIKADO

R-T

LEVEL 1





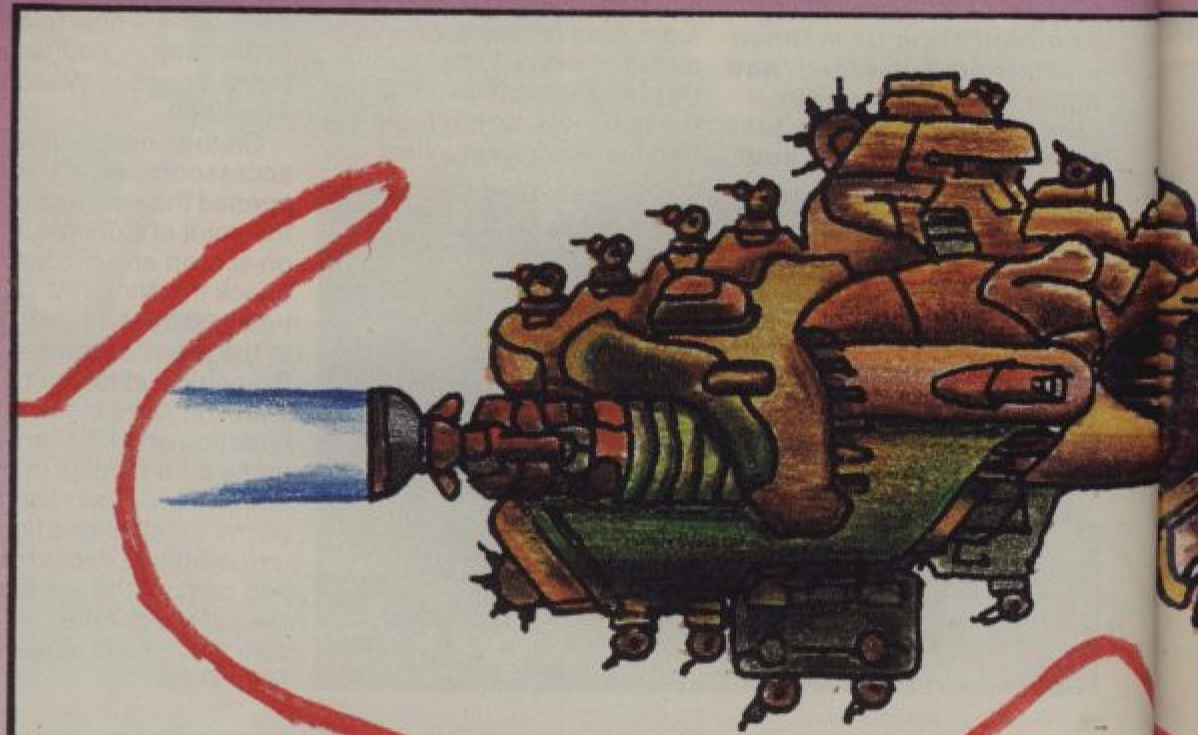
LEVEL 2



LEVEL 3

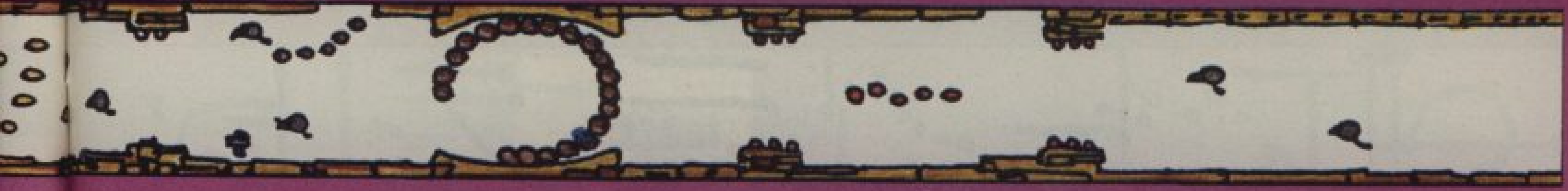
Air-ground lasers are best used on level two. Helix lasers are ideal for three, four, five and eight and reflective lasers are best used on levels one, six and seven.

By the way, never leave your finger off the fire button – always use any spare time to beam up the R-9's laser.



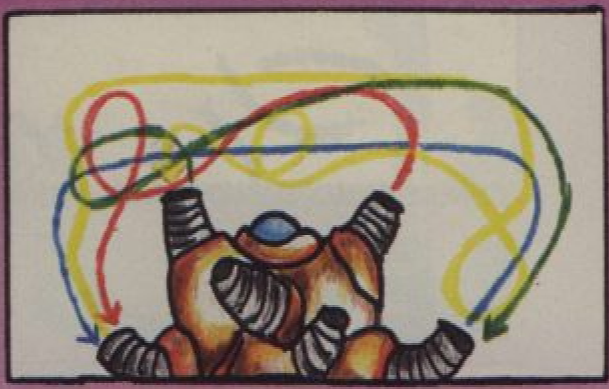
TYPE

Here's a Playmasters special – all eight levels of R-Type, lovingly mapped and drawn by Julian Rignall. Use the tips, study the formations and get blasting!



To take out the spinning circle of guns, beam up as you approach and let rip straight at the blue gun emplacement. This starts a chain reaction of explosions which destroys the whole lot – what a feeling!

Study the illustrated snake pattern, and take steps accordingly. The order of movement is blue, yellow, red and green.





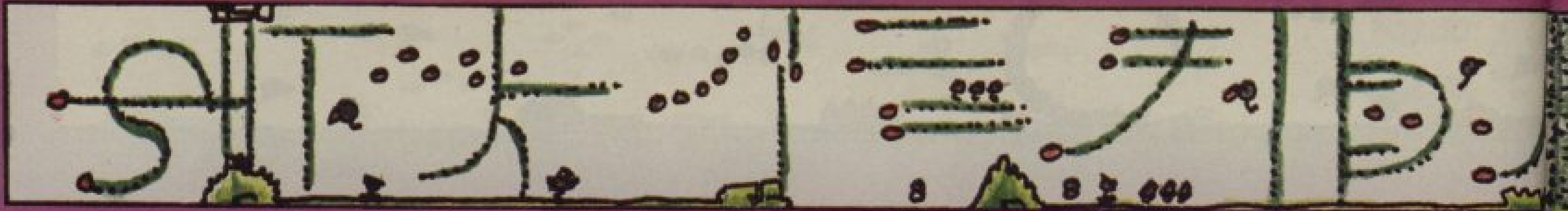


The mothership is one tough cookie – always beam up before letting rip since it takes ages to whittle away its defences with single laser volleys.

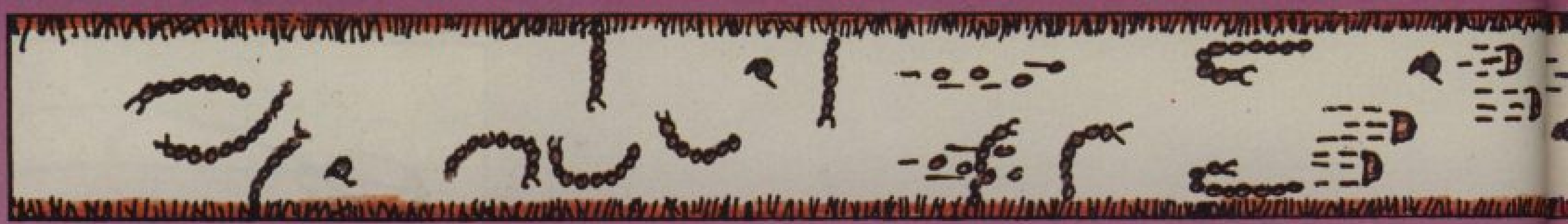
As you start moving back around the ship to the vulnerable spot at the top, make sure that you've attached the pod on the back of the ship for maximum protection. Beware of flame shots from the gun emplacements – the pod doesn't absorb these, and the R-9 explodes on contact.

R-T

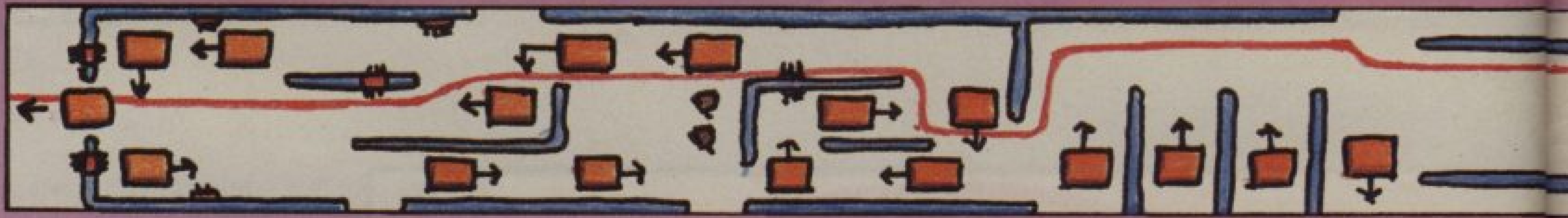
LEVEL 4



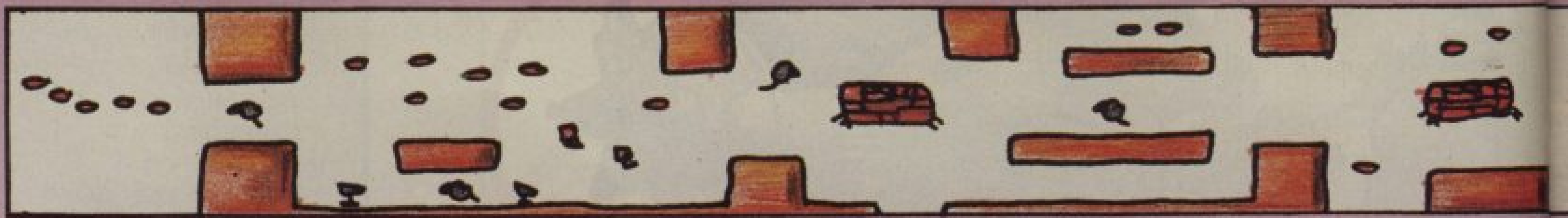
LEVEL 5



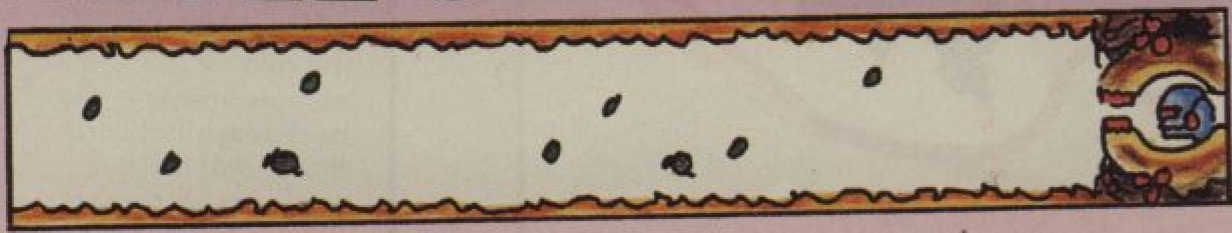
LEVEL 6

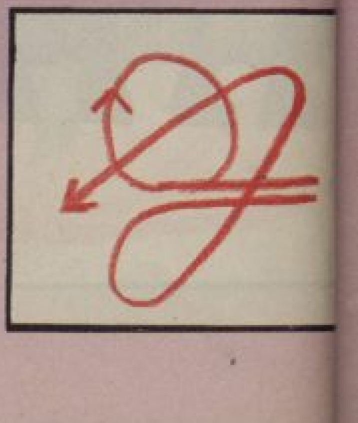


LEVEL 7



LEVEL 8

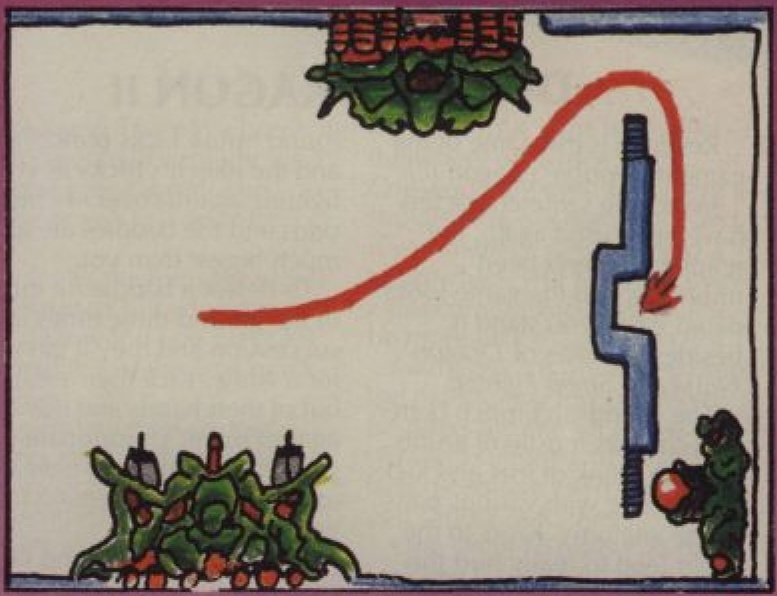




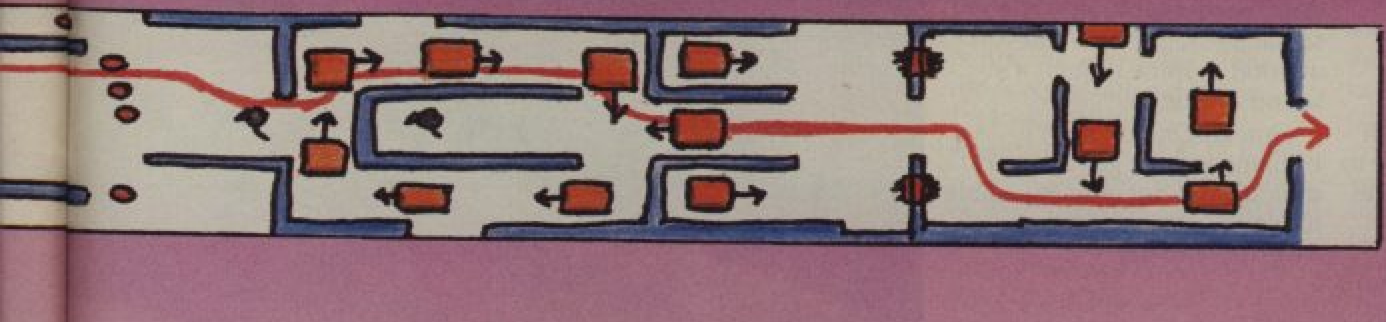
YPE

At the end of level six, put the pod behind the ship and head around to the niche. Stick the pod through the niche and keep firing. When the wall alien climbs up towards the craft, beam up and let it have it in the eye.





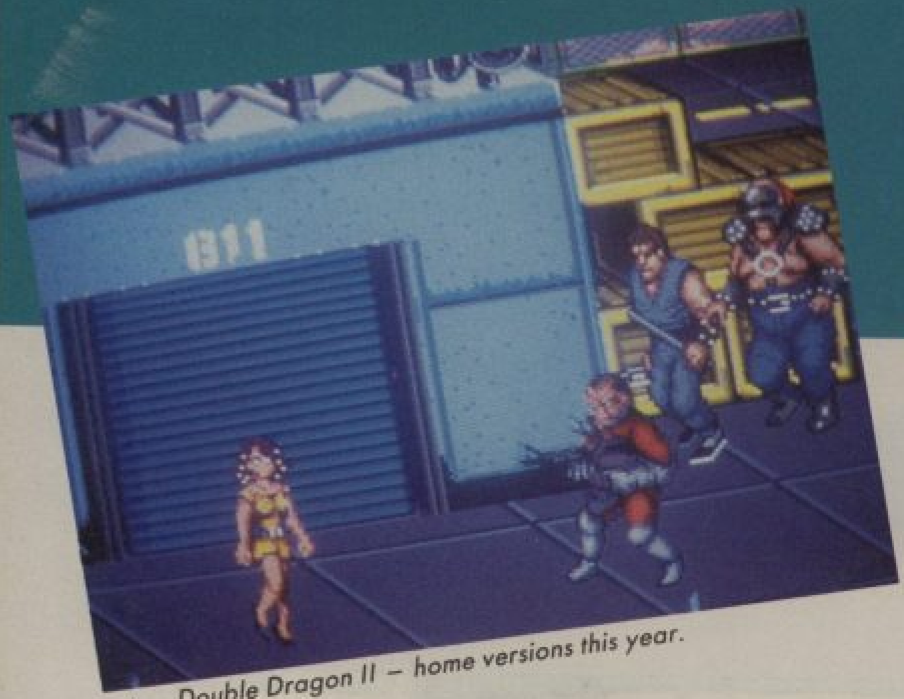






At the end of level eight — the confrontation with Bydo — go to the bottom left of the screen and avoid the spinning missiles. When Bydo opens his mouth, beam up and fire into his jaws.

ARCADE



▲ Double Dragon II – home versions this year.

DOUBLE DRAGON II

Revenge is the name of the game in *Double Dragon II;I.*

In fact the same characters have been used again, the graphics haven't been improved and the game looks dated when you stand it besides the likes of *Dragon Ninja* and *Street Fighter.*

The sound isn't much better and consists mostly of grunts and the thunk of fists and kicks connecting with various parts of the anatomy. Kicks to the groin tend to really hurt the characters who flush a bright red and stagger around a bit!

Double Dragon II can cope with two players simultaneously and their work's cut out to defeat the streets gangs, thugs and wicked-looking ladies in high boots weilding whips. I seem to remember these femme fatales appearing in the original version too.

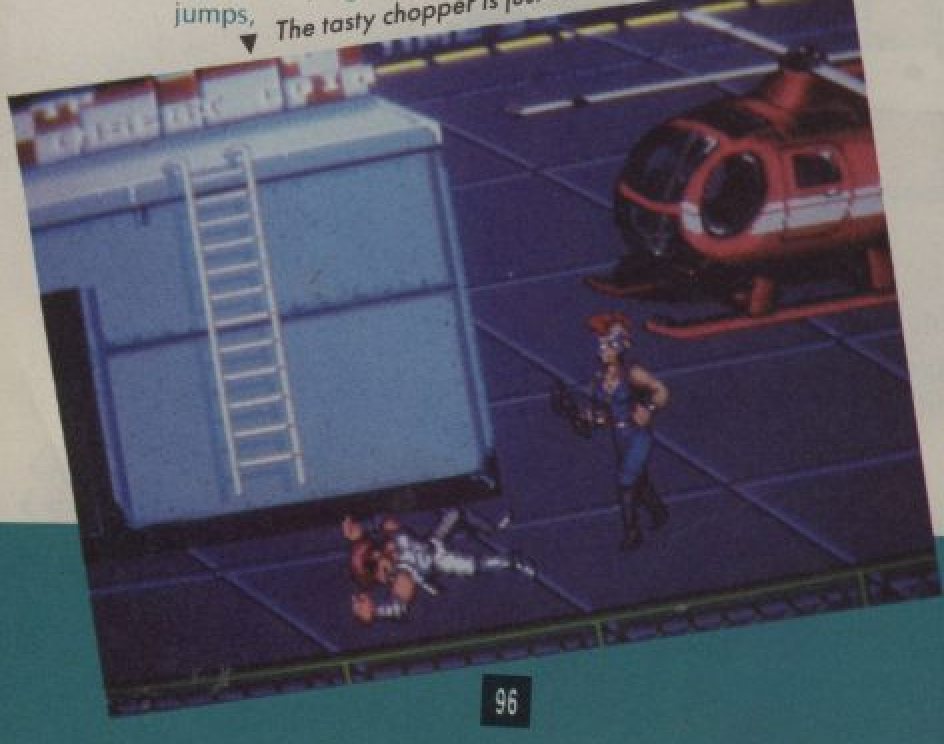
To defend yourself, use the three buttons – jump, punch and kick – in a variety of combinations to produce straight leg kicks, flying jumps, round house kicks punchyes and the like. It's tricky as you're fighting against overwhelming odds and the baddies are all so much bigger than you.

To defeat a baddie hit them to the ground three times in succession and they'll pass out for a while. Kick their weapons out of their hands and use them against them. Unfortunately, you'll only hang onto a weapon for as long as you remain on your own two feet.

One odd bit at the end of each game is a quote from William S Sessions, Director of the FBI who warns, "Winner's dont use drugs." Some sort of social message? Your guess is as good as mine though it's sound advice.

Double Dragon II isn't brilliant and the game is very difficult and not very enjoyable to play. Give me *Shadow Warriors* any day.

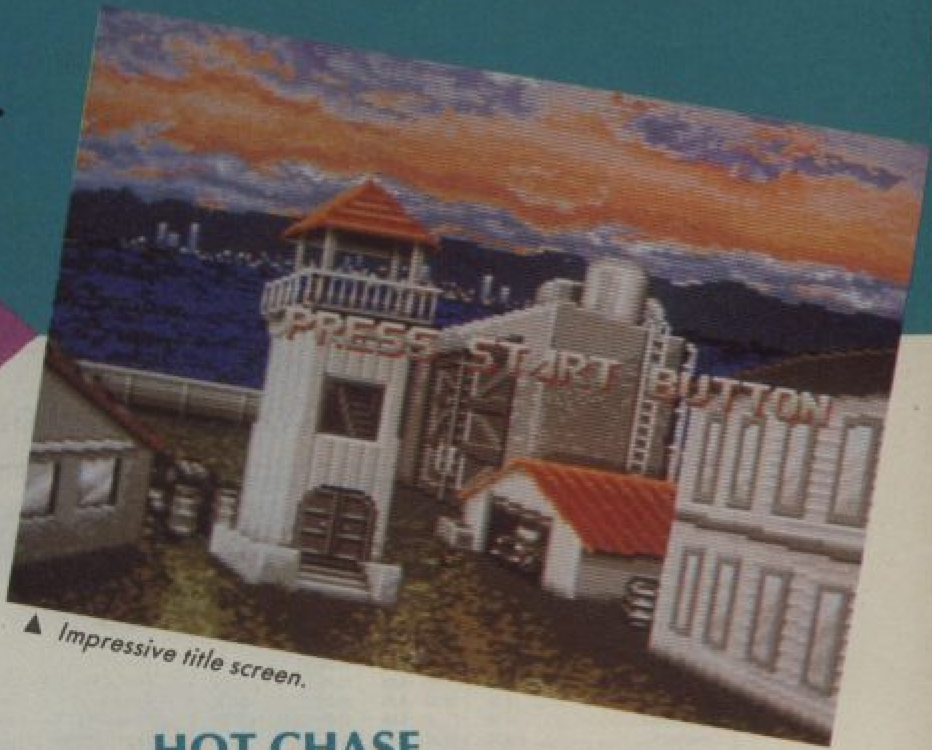
▼ The tasty chopper is just a background graphic.



▼ Bullet holes puncture your wind screen – a racing game first.

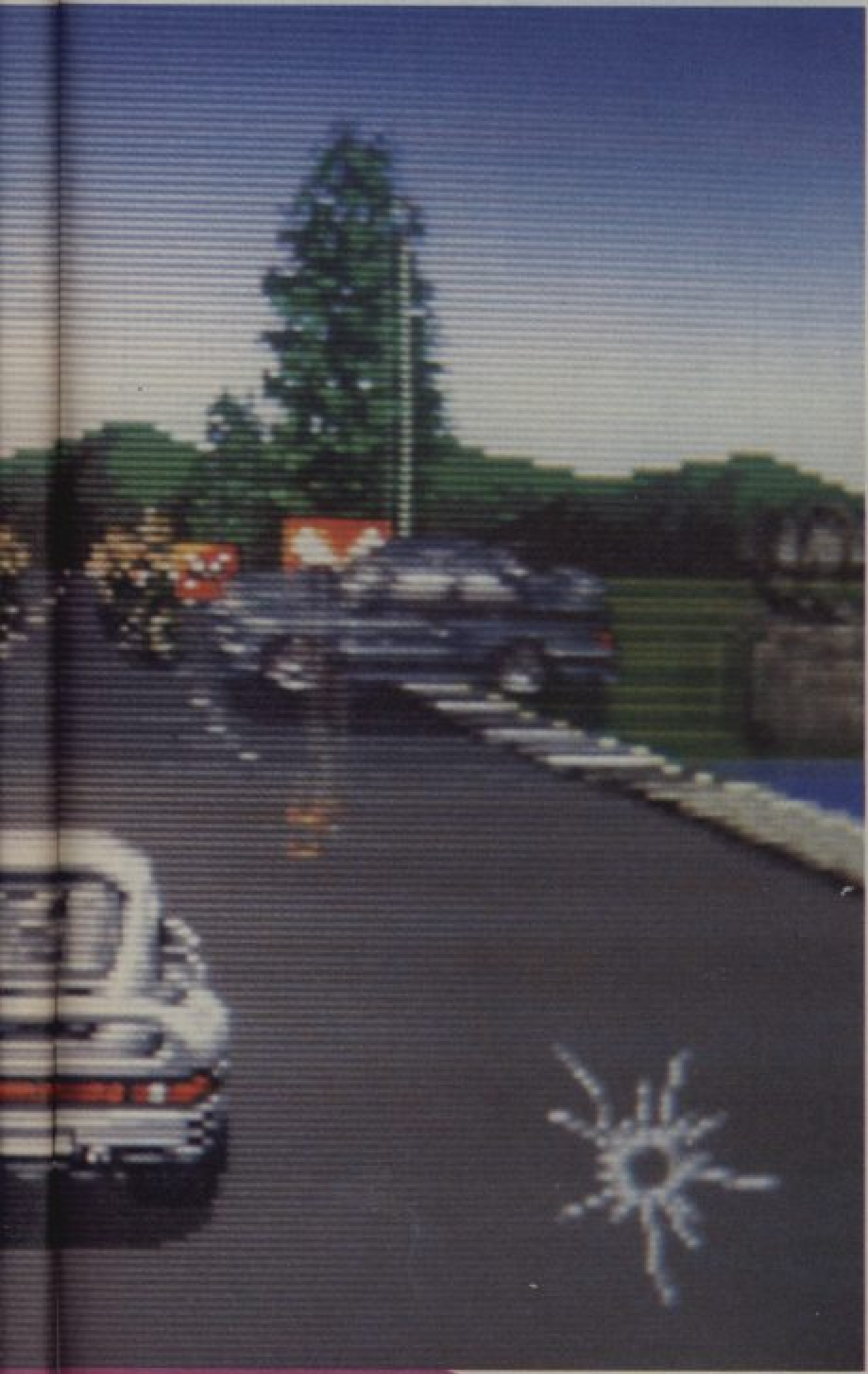


EACTION



▲ *Impressive title screen.*

HOT CHASE



Warning! There is a bomb in your car. It will explode soon. Time is running out. This message will self destruct in fi . . .

Actually the message won't self destruct but your car certainly will if you don't get the hell out of the area quick enough.

A chopper rises up and hovers strafing the road with a stream of fire. Weaving desperately from side to side you try to avoid being hit. It's difficult but not impossible and you're likely to end up with a few bullet holes in your windscreen. Too many direct hits and the screen will be peppered with holes – the result a massive explosion.

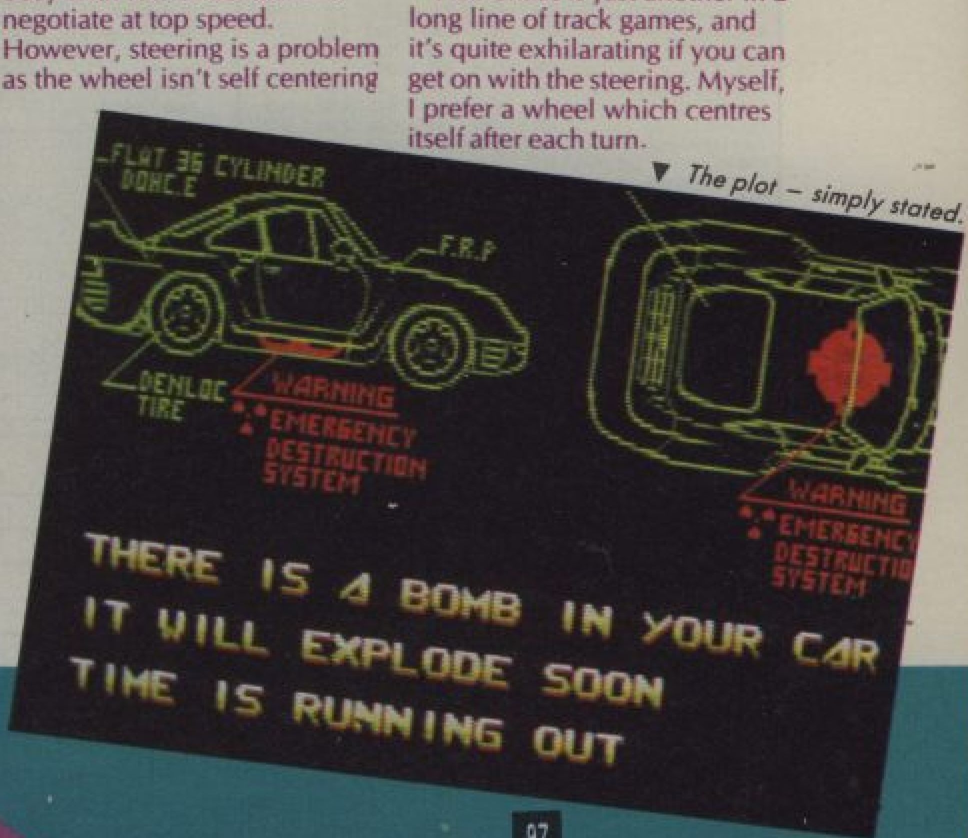
Hot Chase is an amalgamation of lots of games – *After Burner, Road Blasters* et al. It's not just a straight race and there's plenty to keep you busy with lots of obstacles to negotiate at top speed. However, steering is a problem as the wheel isn't self centering as usual, but spins freely like the wheel on *Super Sprint*. Consequently even driving in a straight line is a nightmare and if you manage to drive onto a ramp which will leap you over an oncoming goods trains it'll be more luck than judgement.

Garbage cans are tossed onto the road to make you swerve, boulders are strewn across the tarmac, buildings, trees and lamp posts line the route to stop you sliding onto the grass.

One set of hazards you must look out for are cars and trains which cross the road, with no warning, just as you scream round a bend. Rapid evasive action must be taken and with the steering as it is you're going to have to spin the wheel quickly one way and then counter the move by wrenching it in the opposite direction. With luck you might make it.

Hot Chase is just another in a long line of track games, and it's quite exhilarating if you can get on with the steering. Myself, I prefer a wheel which centres itself after each turn.

▼ *The plot – simply stated.*



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ARCADE ACTION

FIGHTING HAWK

Fighting Hawk from Taito is very much a sequel to *Flying Shark* and it wouldn't surprise me if most of the routines are the same.

As with all vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups of this type it's very fast with lots of action, and quite difficult. You control a plane at the bottom of the screen and your mission is to fly over enemy territory bombing tanks and missile silos while coping with the squadrons of enemy aircraft which zoom down from the top of the screen.

Extra weapons are earned by picking up symbols which are left behind when you blast a whole squadron out of the skys. Once you've got extra fire power though, it'll last only as long as you remain in one piece. However, you're going to need the extra ammo if you're to beat the obligatory end of level 'monster' – in this case a huge lump of iron on wheels. It changes with every level.

What doesn't change is the ferocity of its firepower which is deadly. The trick is to get some really heavy weaponry and then to blast it to bits while concentrating on dodging the stream of bullets which fill the screen.

Speed of action, graphics and music are all very slick and similar to *Flying Shark*. As an original shoot 'em up this is a dodo. But as a sequel it's challenging and offers you a chance to prove your mettle at the controls.



▲ *Fighting Hawk – OK'ish shoot 'em up.*

ARCADE HIGH SCORES

Here's Britain's Arcade High Score table, where the UK's best video games players get their names up in lights. If you've got some hot scores, send them into C + VG Arcade High Scores, C + VG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. By the way, if you've got any arcade hints and tips, send those in too – there's a T-shirt on offer for those that get printed!

AFTERBURNER	9,721,710	Martin Deem (MJD), Portsmouth
ALIEN SYNDROME	775,500	EGG, Portsmouth
ARKANOID	1,241,300	Lee Waters (LEE), Hayling Island
CABAL	1,355,000	Mark Watson (MAW), Manchester
CHASE HQ	9,546,300	R. Thompson, Tamworth
CONTINENTAL CIRCUS	8,766,450	Julian Rignall, Brighton
FLYING SHARK	1,011,810	Gavin Davies (GAV), Swansea
GALAGA 88	1,234,100	Julian Rignall, Brighton
OPERATION WOLF	424,000	DAV, Hastings
OUT RUN	43,050,040	Martin Deem, Portsmouth
POWER DRIFT	5,574,745	Martin Deem, Portsmouth
R-TYPE	1,654,200	R. Thompson, Tamworth
THUNDER CROSS	688,500	Martin Deem, Portsmouth
TOOBIN'	10,550,495	Martin Deem, Portsmouth
VINDICATORS	212,650	Julian Rignall, Brighton
VULCAN VENTURE	789,200	Mike Murray (MIK), Southend

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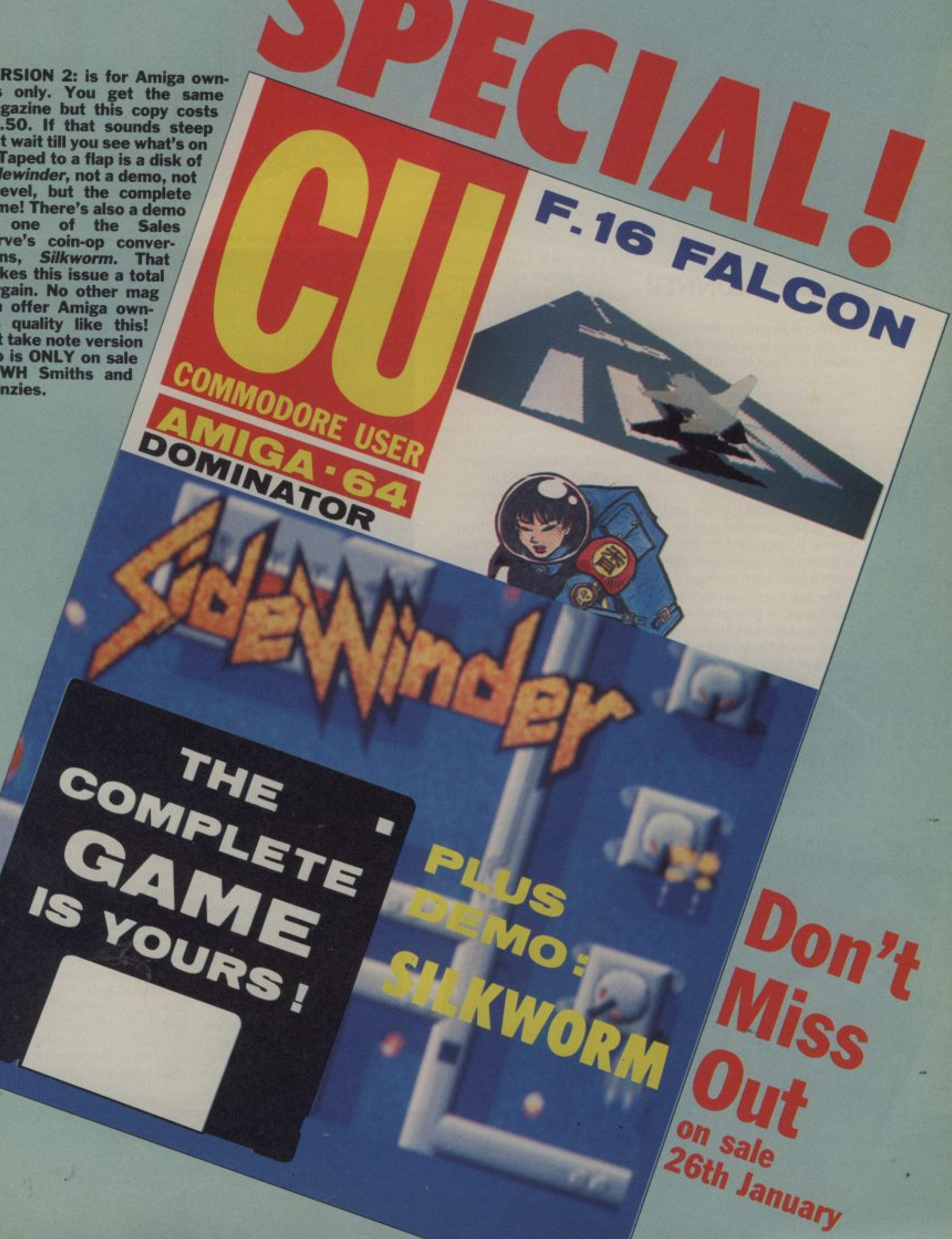
So what's so special about February? Is it because it's not a leap year? No. Is it special because the Ed's birthday is in February. Only a little. In fact February is special because CU is getting a new cover style. Look out for the two big letters on the top left in the future and you won't be disappointed.

The February issue of CU is also special because there's an extra on the magazine for you all. In fact there's two different versions of the magazine. VERSION 1: 64 owners can settle back and enjoy a brilliant game from Special FX called *Hyperactive*. You'll also find a demo of the much fancied new System 3 game *Dominator* on there as well. The issue costs £1.20 as usual, but make sure you pick up the one with a cassette on it if you only own a 64.



FEBRUARY IS SPECIAL!

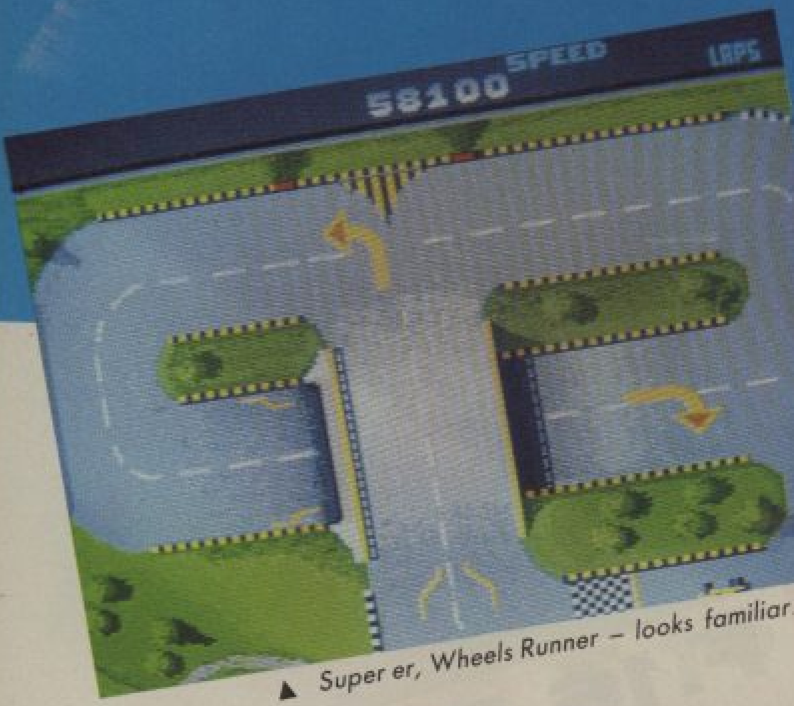
VERSION 2: is for Amiga owners only. You get the same magazine but this copy costs £2.50. If that sounds steep just wait till you see what's on it. Taped to a flap is a disk of *Sidewinder*, not a demo, not a level, but the complete game! There's also a demo of one of the Sales Curve's coin-op conversions, *Silkworm*. That makes this issue a total bargain. No other mag can offer Amiga owners quality like this! But take note version two is ONLY on sale in WH Smiths and Menzies.



Don't Miss Out

on sale 26th January

ARCADE



▲ *Super er, Wheels Runner – looks familiar.*

WHEELS RUNNER

Wheels Runner is the second racing game to appear this month and is a straight clone of Atari's *Super Sprint*. I believe the maxim is if you're going to copy something, then make sure your version is better. I'm afraid International Games has failed dismally.

There are a range of tracks to race round, each more convoluted than the last and like *SuperSprint* the whole course is portrayed on the screen with you looking down from a bird's eye view.

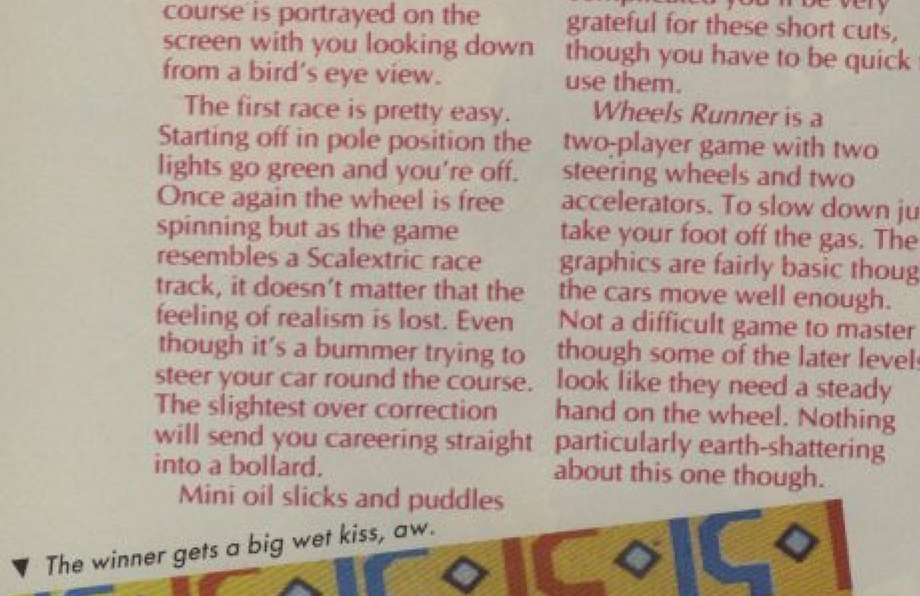
The first race is pretty easy. Starting off in pole position the lights go green and you're off. Once again the wheel is free spinning but as the game resembles a Scalextric race track, it doesn't matter that the feeling of realism is lost. Even though it's a bummer trying to steer your car round the course. The slightest over correction will send you careering straight into a bollard.

Mini oil slicks and puddles litter the track. Gas symbols must be picked up as bonus points which are plentiful. Just steer into the symbols to collect them. The course loops round on itself, so off you go under bridges – where the car disappears from sight for a short while, round the next bend and if you're lucky a barrier will slide open offering you a quick short cut onto the next straight.

Mostly these are features which all appeared in *SuperSprint*. As successive courses become more complicated you'll be very grateful for these short cuts, though you have to be quick to use them.

Wheels Runner is a two-player game with two steering wheels and two accelerators. To slow down just take your foot off the gas. The graphics are fairly basic though the cars move well enough. Not a difficult game to master though some of the later levels look like they need a steady hand on the wheel. Nothing particularly earth-shattering about this one though.

▼ *The winner gets a big wet kiss, aw.*



▼ *Shadow Warrior's super title screen.*



SHADOW WARRIOR

Terror stalks the back streets and dirty alleyways of New York's slums. Gangs hang around corners, tatty posters hang limply from crumbling walls and garbage and old packing cases litter the walkways.

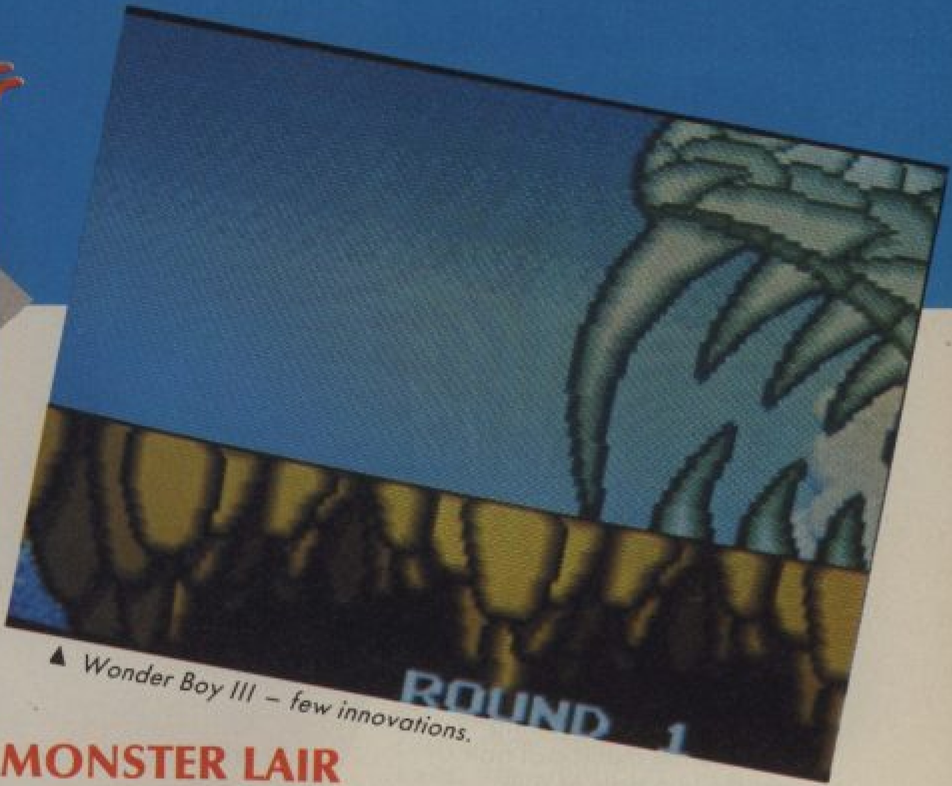
And it's into this area of vicious street battles that you come. Ninja in USA is the name of the first scenario in Tecmo's *Shadow Warriors* which is about as close as you can get to *Dragon Ninja*.

Same large well-drawn sprites, different backdrops but in similar style all help to make you feel totally at home You know what's going to happen next, so you're ready for it.

The gangs don't hesitate. They attack immediately and bodies fly as you give the first of many powerful straight leg kicks. You're not a Ninja for nothing though – you're going to have to work hard to get through this lot. A pole hangs suspended above your head. You leap up and start to swing using your momentum to kick harder. Hanging onto poles or ledges using your legs to kick the enemy is a new and welcome feature in a game which plays like so many others.

Baseball bats, wicked looking chains and swords are just some of the arsenal you can collect. However, when a weapon is uncovered it stays on screen for only a short while.

EACTION



▲ *Wonder Boy III – few innovations.*

You've got to be quick to get them and often, overwhelmed by the thugs, you haven't got time or can't afford to lay yourself open to attack by stopping to pick them up.

Most scenarios have two levels so that you can jump up onto a ledge or platform of sorts to get out of the way . . . only problem is that at some point you're going to have to come down. Your characters jump is the only awkward piece of programming. To leap over the enemy, press the jump button and your character takes off and does a straight backflip over them!!

End-of-level baddies tend to be huge and dwarf you entirely. One which took my immediate fancy is a monstrous Sumo wrestler. I never did get the better of him.

Shadow Warriors, with simultaneous play for two, is great fun. A slick beat 'em up containing nothing startlingly new but with professionally-drawn smooth graphics and masses of action, worthy of special mention is Shadow Warrior's title screen. It's so menacing looking, one of the best I've seen.

▼ *Thugs in masks make tough adversaries.*



MONSTER LAIR

Cute graphics and lots of action coupled with the lightness of a *Mario Brothers* scenario make up Sega's *Monster Lair* – a great little game which is, in fact, *Wonder Boy III.*

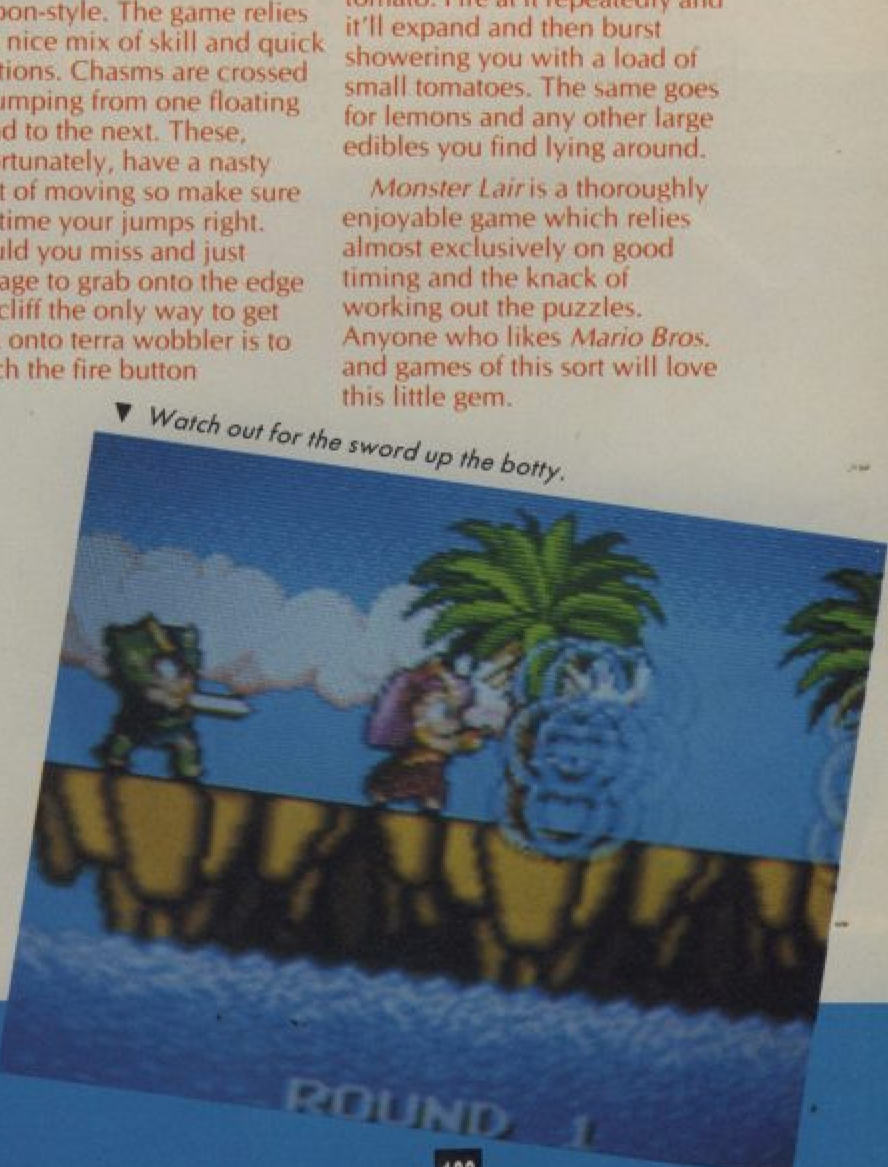
Pink parrots and purple fish, snails, slugs and killer balloons are just some of the nasties you'll be up against as you race across each screen to devastate yet another wave of baddies.

The backgrounds are highly coloured and very much cartoon-style. The game relies on a nice mix of skill and quick reactions. Chasms are crossed by jumping from one floating island to the next. These, unfortunately, have a nasty habit of moving so make sure you time your jumps right. Should you miss and just manage to grab onto the edge of a cliff the only way to get back onto terra wobbler is to punch the fire button repeatedly and hope!

Fruit is eaten for extra energy and bonus weapons are collected which are useful in the battle against the end-of-level biggie – a giant fish or something equally whacky. The only way to learn this game is to watch someone else playing it. For instance, some of the fruit and veg can be picked up for extra points. However, it's possible to get even more points by powering up a tomato. Fire at it repeatedly and it'll expand and then burst showering you with a load of small tomatoes. The same goes for lemons and any other large edibles you find lying around.

Monster Lair is a thoroughly enjoyable game which relies almost exclusively on good timing and the knack of working out the puzzles. Anyone who likes *Mario Bros.* and games of this sort will love this little gem.

▼ *Watch out for the sword up the botty.*



Mean Machines

There's plenty going on in the console world at the moment – read the news pages to find out more. If you're after something more immediate however, there's two Sega reviews – Great Football and Great Golf – as well as Rad Racer on the Nintendo, as well as some tips for all you budding racers.

Great Golf

► MACHINE: SEGA.
► PRICE: £22.95.
► REVIEWER: PAUL GLANCEY.

You lucky, lucky, Sega owning golf fans! No longer need you worry about looking a prat, strutting around the municipal golf course in a pair of silly trousers. *Great Golf* features just about everything the Sunday golfer could want from a computer simulation of the sport, all portrayed in a 3D format, similar to the popular *Leaderboard* games.

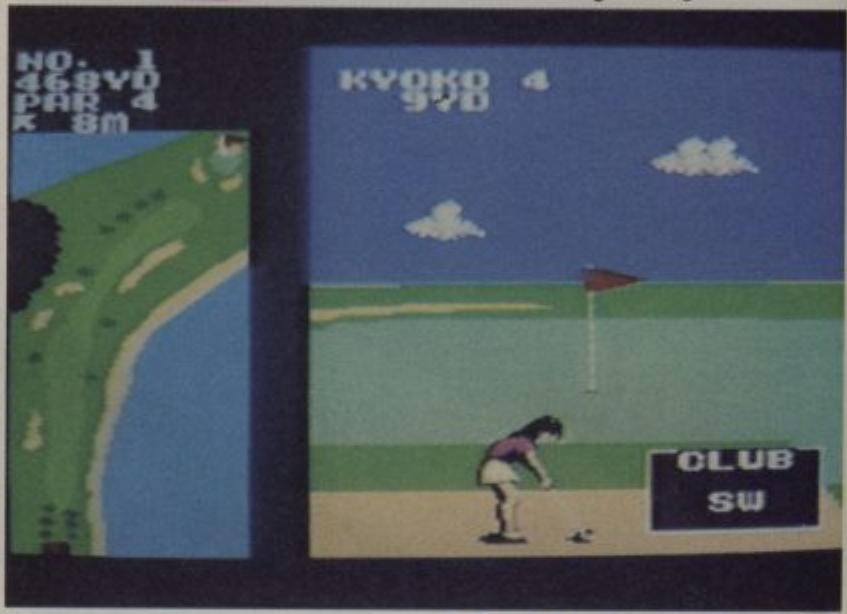
Up to four players can participate in a stroke or match play game, each choosing their own clubs from a set of fourteen, then after a plan of the course is displayed, you're plonked at the tee on the first hole.

At the left of the screen is a plan of the hole, showing the fairway, the green and any trees, water hazards and sand traps between you and the cup. To the right of this is the 3D view from behind your golfer, which is swiftly redrawn at every stroke. This is a very impressive piece of graphics programming which creates a very pleasing view down the course towards the hole. select the strength of shot. Unfortunately, the bar moves a little quickly making short shots rather difficult to control.

▼ *Whack – send that ball down the green.*



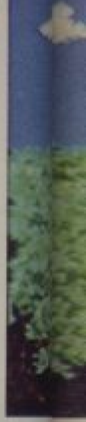
▼ *The red flag is in sight.*



Judging from the distance to the cup, you then select your club, your golfer's stance (effectively choosing a hook or slice shot), point him in the right direction and swing, using a rising bar to

Sound is used nicely, with some decent swoosh and plop effects, the odd jingle, and a few pieces of speech.

The little extras all add up to make a pretty good game of golf, certainly one which



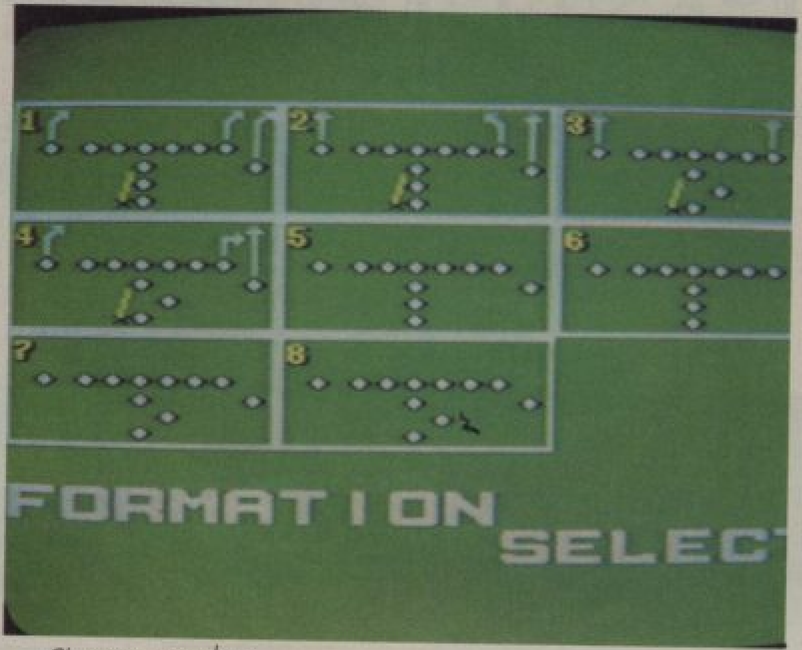
should please the armchair Ballesteroses out there. Gamers whose interests lie closer to the mainstream should consider whether this sort of game is going to hold their interest long enough to warrant £23 expenditure.

SEGA

- ► GRAPHICS 83%
- ► SOUND 69%
- ► VALUE 70%
- ► PLAYABILITY 76%
- ► **OVERALL 75%**

▼ *...w are you going to get out of the trees.*





Choose your play.

Great Football

- ► **MACHINE: SEGA.**
- ► **PRICE: £22.95.**
- ► **REVIEWER: JULIAN RIGNALL.**

Hut! Hut! Grab your crash helmet and prepare to wrestle on the gridiron in this new Sega American football simulation.

Great Football is a one or two-player game, and is played over a horizontally scrolling pitch. Play is controlled via a series of menus, and the player is also given control over the quarterback during play.

If a two-player game is selected, both teams battle together in a "realistic" fashion, with the ball changing hands as in a real game. The one-player version is different though – the computer team is given a score which the human player must beat. The computer team never actually plays the ball – the player's team is just penalised and moved back ten yards should he fail to move the ball ten yards in four downs or the computer team intercepts a pass. Although this does make for an exciting game – you're making the plays all the time – I did think it was a bit of a cop-out. I'd have liked to take on a computer offence.

At the start of a play a menu of moves are displayed, and each is highlighted in turn – pressing the fire button when the desired move is lit selects it. The only problem with this is that each move is always lit in turn, even after a selection has been made, resulting in a long wait between plays. This might be alright for the two-player game, so the opponent can't tell which move you've selected, but playing against the computer I thought it unnecessary and tedious.

The play itself is joycard-controlled, and the player takes part directly by being the quarterback. Depending on the move selected, the ball can be passed (whereupon the player takes control of the receiver), or a running play can be attempted. Although the players are tiny, and detail is lacking, I found this part of the game quite rewarding, especially when a long play move was successfully pulled off.

Great Football is a good simulation, but I think it could have been improved in a few areas. The move select screen is a major gripe, and it gets decidedly annoying having to sit while the computer slowly highlights each move. Graphics could have been improved too – close plays can get rather confusing due to the myriad of milling pixels.

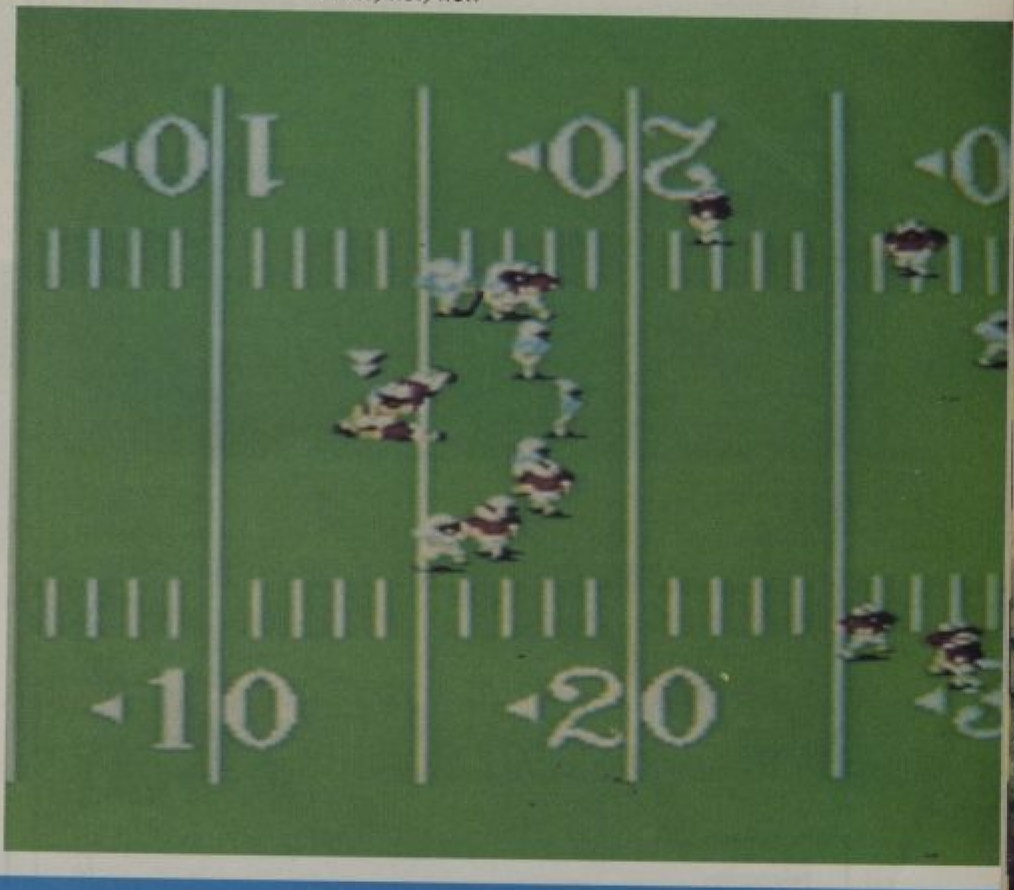
On the positive side, the game is fun and challenging – especially in two-player mode – and the wealth of moves and plays available should keep the American football enthusiast happy.

Definitedly one to look out for if you can't wait until Sunday!

SEGA

- ► GRAPHICS 62%
- ► SOUND 58%
- ► VALUE 72%
- ► PLAYABILITY 83%
- ► **OVERALL 82%**

▼ *Hut, hut, hut.*



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ADVERTISEMENT INDEX

Mean Machines Tips

Okay all you Rad Racers – put your car into neutral and read these tips before setting out, and you should see a marked improvement in your performance.

One of the important tricks to master is braking at the right time – just as you enter a corner. Timing is critical, so you can accelerate out of the bend and overtake any cars by moving across the entire

1



2



road. Practice this maneouvre, as on hgiher levels as this is the only opportunity you're likely to get to pass other cars.

For advanced players, sharp bends CAN be taken at top speed by moving to the inside and hitting another car just as you start sliding across the road. This knocks the car back to the inside lane without loss of speed, and shaves seconds off your overall time.

Slipstreaming is another good method. Locate a fast car and sit just behind it, travelling at the same speed. This means you can bomb along the track as just below your normal top speed without fear of colliding with other cars on the track. This may sound an odd tactic, but it's far better to drive slightly slower safely than dash along and risk a time-consuming accident.

When a game is over, restart by pressing the start button while pressing the A fire button and you'll begin on the level where you just finished.

Finally, study the maps to plan ahead. We haven't included levels seven and eight – if you can get past course six, you won't need them!

3



4





▲ *Rad Racer – Nintendo at its best.*

5



6



Rad Racer



▲ *Rad Racer – outperforms Outrun.*

► **MACHINE: NINTENDO.**
► **PRICE: £29.95.**
► **REVIEWER: JULIAN RIGNALL.**

Apart from Continential Circus, there's only one other 3D race game – and that's Rad Racer. And unlike Sega games, you don't need to fork out a fortune on special 3D specs – the film-style blue and red specs supplied in the box are all you need to get quite a reasonable effect – if you don't like it you can always play it in normal 2D mode.



▲ *Night racing – its fast.*

At the start of a game the player chooses either an F1 racing car or a 328 twin turbo sports car – they're both pretty fast and have negligible differences.

There are eight courses in all, each with four checkpoints; the objective is simply to race from one point to another within the allotted time limit to be granted extra time for the next stage – traditional stuff, really. Reach the final checkpoint on the course, the car skids to a halt and a points bonus is awarded before advancing to the next, more difficult track.

As with most Nintendo games, the gameplay is superb. There's a genuine feeling of speed, and the hills and road perspective are very realistic – in fact, I'd go so far to say that Rad Racer is superior to Outrun on the Sega!

The going is pretty tough – the first two tracks are relatively easy to complete, but from then on it becomes a real race to get to the finish line before the timer expires.

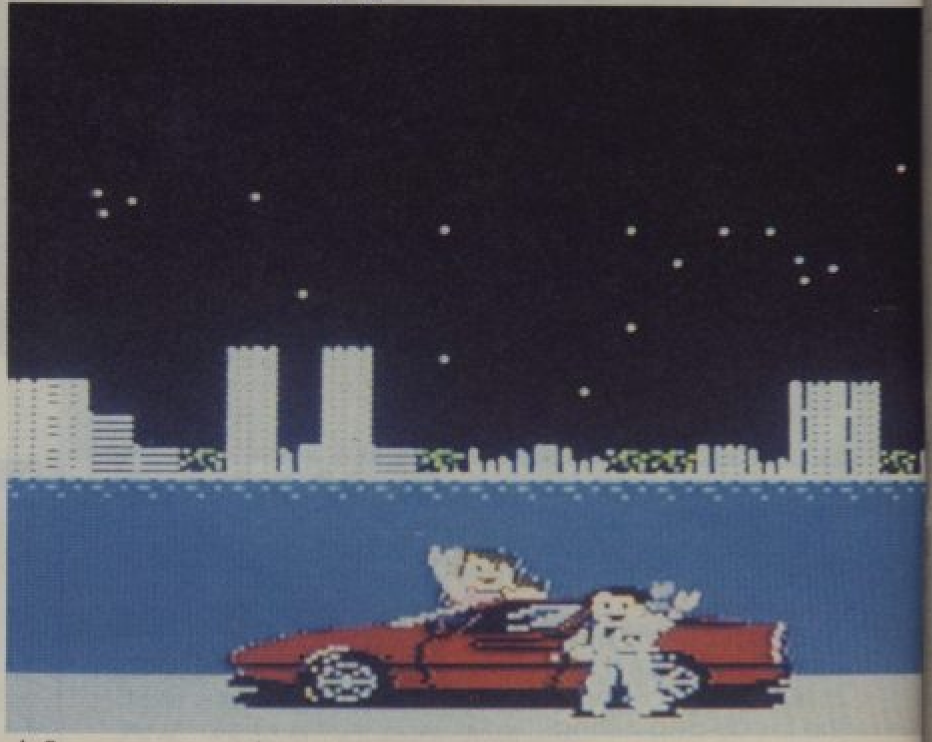
The graphics are excellent, the scrolling backdrops are extremely well drawn, and colour has been used thoughtfully to very good effect. The sprites are also high quality, and the update is smooth and convincing – just what a race game needs.

There are even two different soundtracks, or just sound effects if you wish!

So, if you're after a fast, exhilarating and challenging race game, look no further than Rad Racer.

NINTENDO

► GRAPHICS	81%
► SOUND	79%
► VALUE	68%
► PLAYABILITY	87%
► **OVERALL**	**84%**


▲ *Features two sound tracks.*

Mean Machines News

far more likely that we'll see the new Sega much sooner than the Nintendo. The bad news is that Nintendo aren't planning [illegible] here until at least the 1990's. So that leaves it wide open, especially with the new Atari ST console and the Konix console coming soon – and the PC Engine waiting in the wings. One thing's for sure – the early ninenties are going to be a very interesting time for Mean Machines . . .



▲ World War I action.

▼ Stunning graphics.


New Nintendo

The hottest news from Japan is that the Super Famicom – the new 16-bit Nintendo – has just been revealed to the public.

It's a very attractive-looking machine, and is fully compatible with all existing Nintendo titles – thus giving the machine an instant library of some 400 titles! It also means that owners of old Nintendo games will still be able to play all their favourites.

The only games that's so far been is Dragonfly, a graphically superb aeroplane game which looks absolutely stunning – we've also seen some demo screens of digitised pictures, which also look brilliant.

So, now both the 16-bit Nintendo and Sega are out. Which will be the most popular? Well our money's on Nintendo – surely they can't fail? But in the UK it's

▼ Dragonfly – gasp!



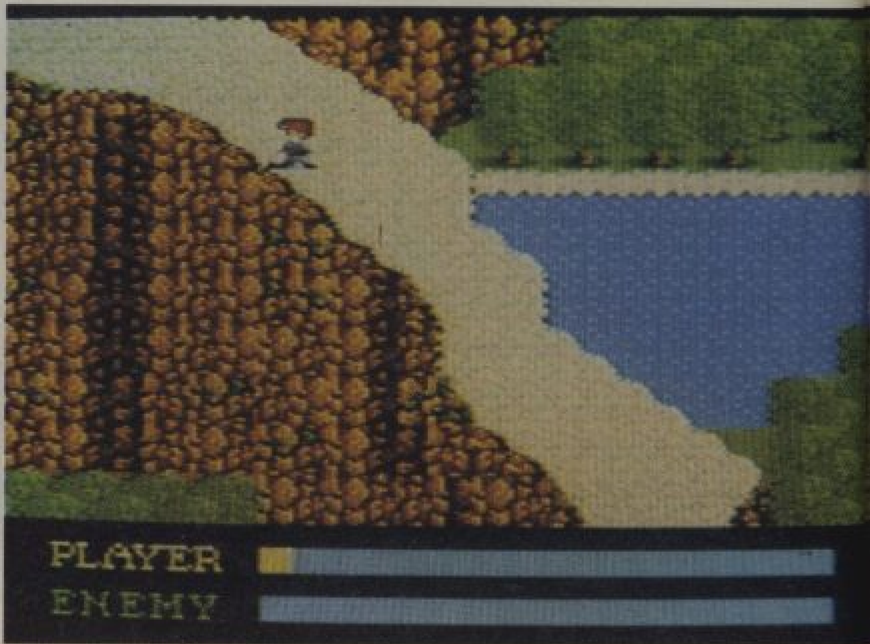
▲ The 16-bit Nintendo.

Why Y/S

Coming soon on the Sega is Y/S, a massive arcade adventure which boasts a load/save feature – rather like the Nintendo game Zelda.

It arrived just a little too late to be included in this month's column, so all we can do is tell you that it looks like one of the most impressive Sega releases so far, and incorporates excellent graphics and a huge map. There'll be a full review next month – as for now you'll just have to make do with a screenshot.

▼ YS is going to a Sega biggie.


▼ YS – huge adventure.


Nintendo Newies!!

One glance at the Vulcan Venture pictures is all you need to see that it looks like the hottest Nintendo game yet! Everything from the arcade game has been included – the only thing missing is a release date in this country . . .

New releases in America are Platoon – licensed from Ocean, with exactly the same game design as their computer versions, Xenophobe, Paperboy, Track and Field II, Friday the 13th and Skate or Die, which is the same as the Electronic Arts computer game.

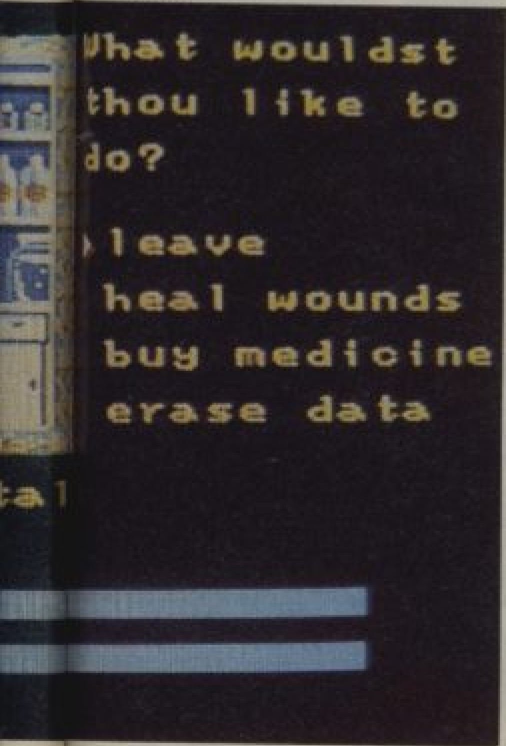
In the New Year, Terra Cresta, Nightmare on Elm Street, Who Framed Roger Rabbit and Star Trek will be making appearances in the US – but when will they be seen in Europe? We'll be the first to tell you as soon as we know.



▲ Flaming moons of Vulcan Venture.



▲ Ocean's Platoon – Nintendo.





▲ Track and Field II – PC Engine.

▼ Vulcan Venture – Nintendo.



▼ Dragon Spirit – PC Engine.



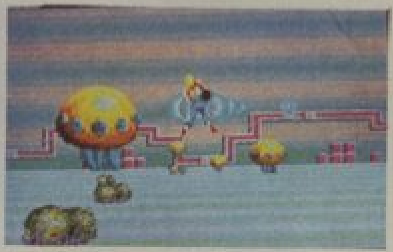
More PC Engine Delights!!

There have been numerous requests for us to publish pictures of PC Engine Space Harrier – so here they are. Just for the record, we've also got pictures of Street Fighter (which is currently only available on the PC Engine CD ROM) and Dragon Spirit – which both look more than impressive.

Out in the New Year is Nectaris, a strategy arcade game which looks nothing short of brilliant. The graphics are marvellous – we'll bring you more details as soon as we have a copy of the game.



▲ Nectaris – PC Engine.

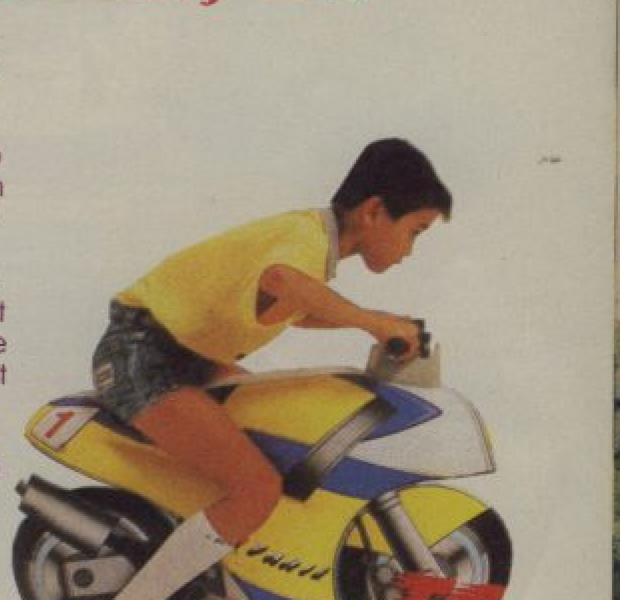


▲ Space Harrier – PC Engine.

Blow Up and Hang-On

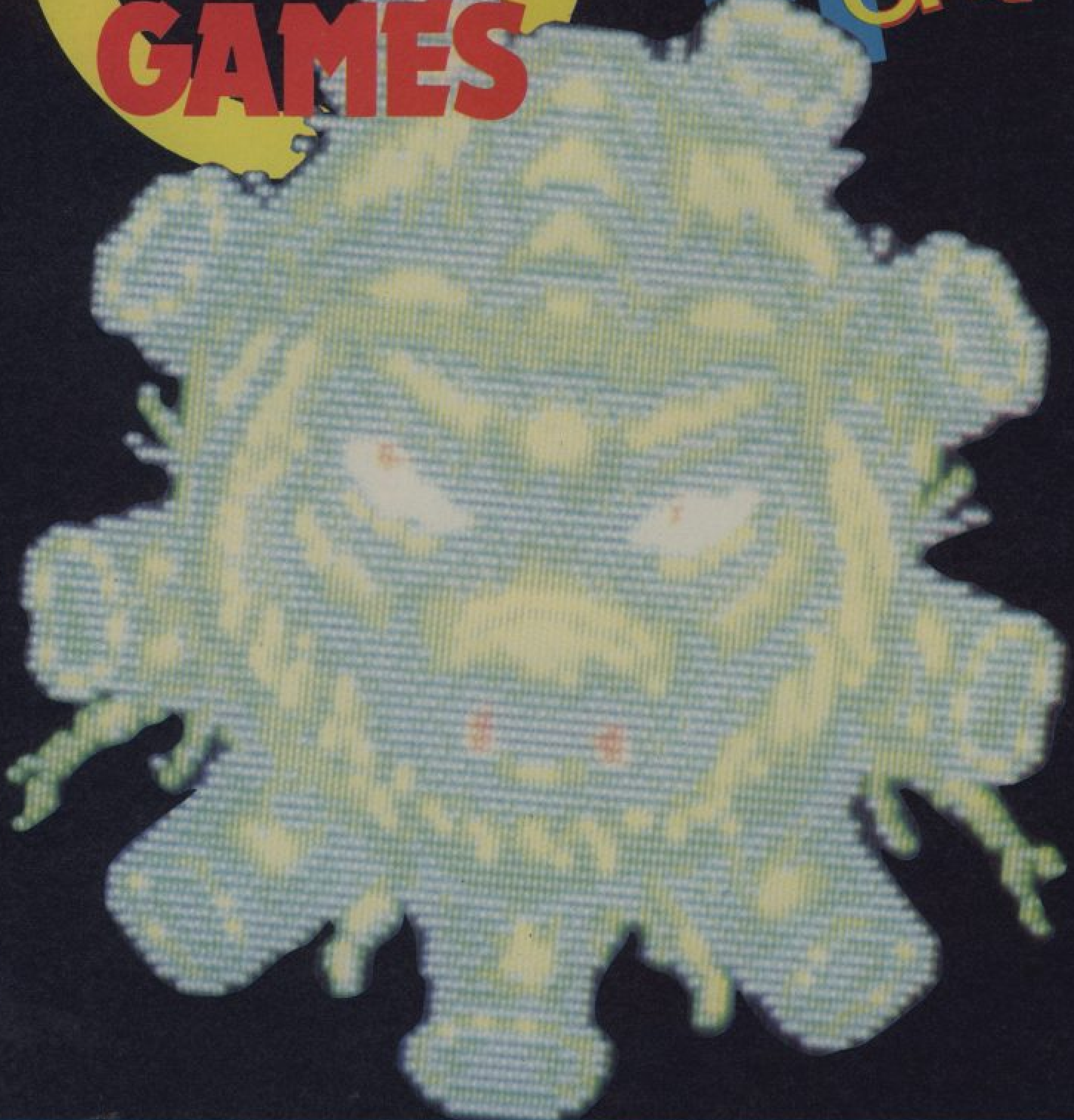
The latest add-on to push back the frontiers of video gaming silliness is an inflatible motorcycle, available for the Nintendo game Top Rider. It works in the same way as the sit-on version of the Hang-On arcade machine, with the rider swaying left and right to guide his on-screen bike down the race track. Great fun, eh – but the real challenge is attempting not to look like a complete and utter plonker!

At the moment the blow-up bike is only available in Japan – will anyone be brave (or silly) enough to release it over here?



COMPUTER +video GAMES

Next Month



Next month's issue will really blow your rocks off as we bring you an exclusive all-versions review of *Blasteroids,* Mirrorsoft's blistering conversion of the superb Atari coin-op.

And we'll be looking at all the hottest new releases, as well as bringing you news and previews of all the latest computer and console games. There'll also be a plethora of tips and maps, and a report on all the latest arcade machines.

C+VG has everything a video games player could ask for — don't miss it.

Out To Lunch

I never have been able to come to terms with January. Doorway to the new year, if my Latin serves me well. But somehow, after the hangover has worn off, everything seems to continue as before, only bleaker, greyer, more wintery.

But not this year. 1989 will be a breakthrough year. The year when the face of computing is changed beyond recognition by the consoles, by 16-bit and low priced PCs, by steam-powered binary counting frames and who knows what else?

Prediction, a dangerous business but all part of the territory if you want to be a media pundit, paid to pontificate in expert tones. So let's take the New Year, in its already soiled diaper, and with an expert application of the scalpel cast its entrails to the wind and dissect the bawling brat to see what makes it wail.



▲ *Why is this flat headed gent chewing a Sega?*

There is a theory in the prediction business that if you want to know what Britain will do tomorrow you see what the States did yesterday. In hardware terms this means a radical re-think of our games machines. It doesn't take Nostradamus to predict the slippery slide into budget obscurity of the 8-bit machines – though the C64 continues to hang on like a lemming with second thoughts.

But what will replace the old guard? Easy – the Amgia and ST you say. Or is it so simple? According to Microprose's 'Wild Bill' Stealey, the ST has soared like a dead duck in the States and the Amiga can only produce single-prop performance compared with the jet propulsion of IBM compatibles.

What? Serious computers! Well, yes, because the PC can do more than produce spreadsheets in lurid green and purple as the business boys would have us believe.

Upgrade from CGA graphics to EGA of the increasingly popular (but so far ludicrously expensive) VGA and you're talking enough colours and high enough res to give an Amiga a run for its money in most games players' books. And you can still do all the serious things with it too, making it the complete home computer. That's why it's a hit in the States.

The Americans don't make our Puritanical division between leisure and home productivity so it's quite permissible for them to get the most out of their micros. That's the market that the Sincalr PC200 and Schneider's neat little Amiga-styled, £399 Euro PC (despite both being saddled with the wrong graphic standard) could start to open up over here.

I don't believe the change will happen overnight, or even over next year, or that suddenly ST and Amiga owners will bin their babies to buy what is frankly prehistoric technology compared with the 68000 machines. But I do think that Atari and Commodore will find themselves challenged by older, more serious users who would prefer to buy one, widely compatible micro, than a brace of machines depending on whether they're feeling business-like or frivolous.

Inexorably linked with this hardware shift is a change in software. Already City yuppies, left with time on their terminals since the Stock Market crash, have taken to games like Leisure Suit Larry. This is the beginning of computer gaming gaining respectability and you can bet that your average Porsche driving professional won't want to join Rambo killing Russians in yet another tie-in.

Does this sound depressing? Well it shouldn't. As software grows up and PC owners join Amiga and ST fans in demanding the complexity and sophistication of an F-19 Stealth Fighter or Pools of Radiance, there will be rumblings at the other end of the market. The Sega has started to surge; Nintendo took its time getting its act together. But this is just the start.

If you're going to use your micro for nothing more than zapping aliens, collecting objects and running the hundred metres, why do you need a keyboard? In Japan they've even found ways of role playing with nothing more compex than a pair of joycards. So strip away those expensive, extraneous alphanumerics and get yourself a dedicated games machine.

By next Christmas the Sega and Nintendo could look pretty primitive compared with what you can buy. There'll be a low-cost ST console for starters, and strong rumours suggest a stripped down Amiga too, at least in the States, for poeple who only ever wanted that superior sound and graphics for brighter, noisier explosions.

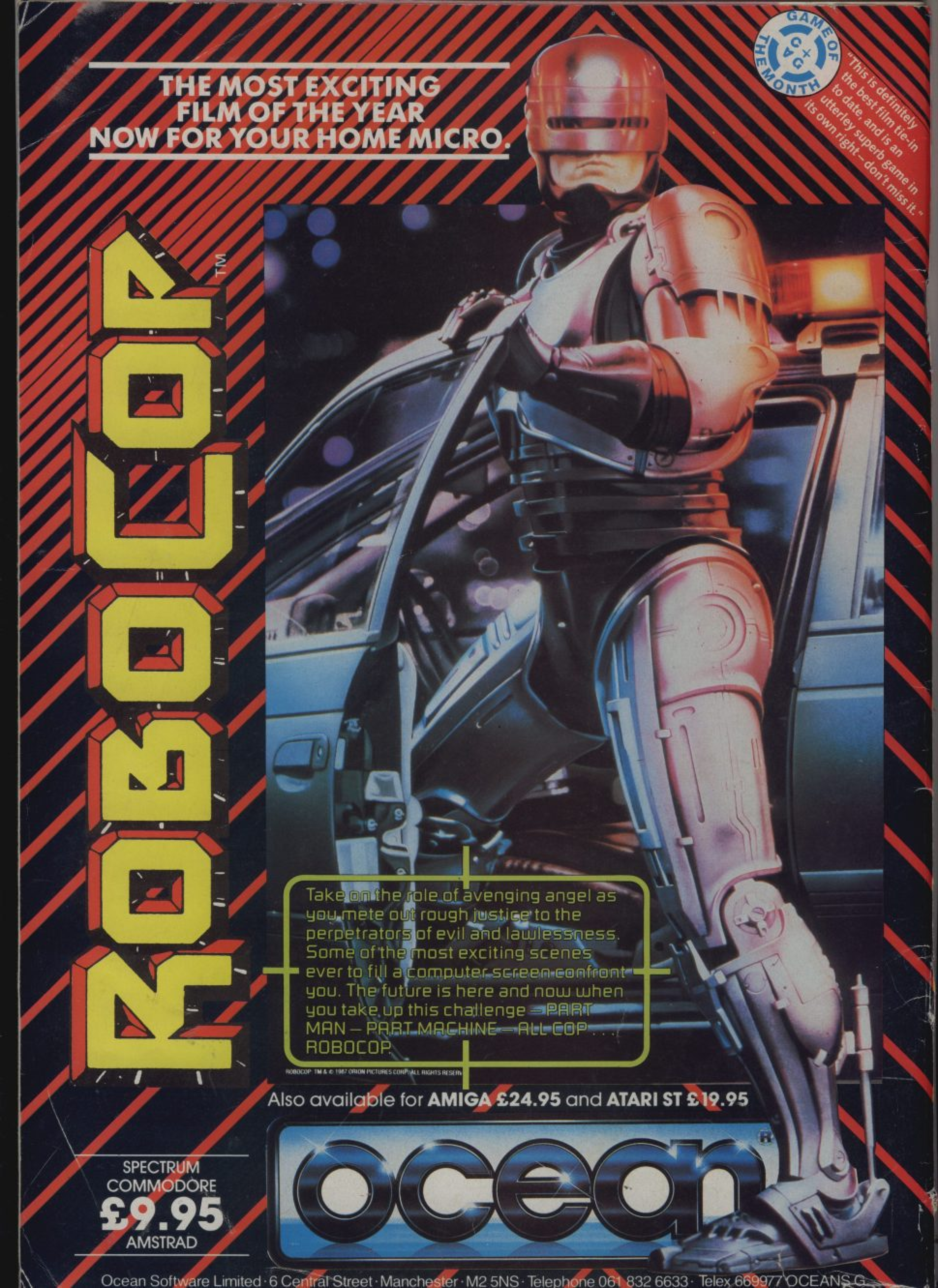
Of course Sega will respond with its 16-bit model. Then there's the PC Engine. Will we really be able to buy the Japanese super machine by the end of '89. The official line is 'No comment,' but my moles report one particular software house has oodles of them lying around. Just for the staff's leisure hours, hey?

One machine we can safely predict is the Konix Konsole. Still officially under wraps, investigations reveal graphics more like the Archmides than the Amiga, disk loading software cutting down on cartridges costs (am I the only person to find £30 for a shoot 'em up, however good, a mite steep?). And most radical is its expansion possibilities, which include a spindle mounting a steering wheel or handle bars, and maybe even pedal controls. Who knows, the Welsh Wizards may even have a mobile seat, just like the ones in the arcades, up their sleeves or under their bums or wherever they may hide it.

Again this will mean a change in software. Rod Cousens of Activision definitedly backs the idea of a cartridge based future. Plugging in an arcade licence will be as simple as dropping thirty pence into the original machine. And Andrew Hewson has announced that his long established company will be publishing for the consoles, which should bring a fresh and original breath to the coin-op conversion dominated scene.

Which is what's going to happen. Or then again, maybe not. But there's one thing of which you can be sure. You'll be able to read all the facts first in the next twelve issues of C+VG. And providing I've got at least some of this correct, you'll find all my opinionated bile and bigoted ramblings here at the end of the mag as usual. It will be an interesting year.


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